

THE Spiritual Magazine.

Vol. IV.]

NOVEMBER, 1863.

[No. 11.]

SPIRITUALISM IN BIOGRAPHY:— WILLIAM COWPER: THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

WILLIAM COWPER is a name dear to the Christian heart, a household word in English homes. His muse is pure as snow, gentle as the dew, simple as the linnet's song. He is eminently England's domestic poet. His retiring, gentle, affectionate disposition, unobtrusive piety, and love of country and of Nature—especially of Nature as it is seen under English skies, combined with that awful affliction which darkened his days and accompanied him to the verge of the grave, all enlist our warmest sympathies and affections in his behalf. Pleasant would it be to linger long and lovingly over his private virtues and public usefulness, his services to literature, and through literature to the world. But this would lead too far from the immediate purpose of these chapters; which is, from biography to illustrate spirit-communion and influx, in its varied forms of manifestation; its shadows and sufferings, not less than its radiant glories and transports—its wilderness of temptation as well as its mount of transfiguration.

The outward life of Cowper, like that of most literary men, was not an eventful one, and, excepting one or two incidents, may here be lightly passed over. His true life is to be read in his *Memoir*, *Poems*, and *Letters*; especially in his *Letters*, in which his views and the workings of his mind are laid open without reserve to his sympathising friends.

In a letter to Mrs. King, dated "Western Underwood, March 3, 1788," Cowper gives the following sketch of his history; he was then in his fifty-fifth year:—"There is nothing in my story that can possibly be worth your knowledge; yet, lest I should seem to treat you with a reserve which at your hands I have not experienced, such as it is, I will relate it. I was bred to the law; a profession to which I was never much inclined, and in which I engaged rather because I was desirous to gratify a most indulgent father than because I had any hope of success in it myself. I spent twelve years in the Temple, where I made

no progress in that science to cultivate which I was sent thither. During this time my father died. Not long after him, died my mother-in-law; and at the expiration of it, a melancholy seized me, which obliged me to quit London, and consequently to renounce the bar. I lived some time at St. Albans. After having suffered in that place long and extreme affliction, the storm was suddenly dispelled, and the same day-spring from on high which has arisen upon you, arose on me also. I spent eight years in the enjoyment of it; and have ever since the expiration of those eight years, been occasionally the prey of the same melancholy as at first. In the depths of it I wrote *The Task*, and the volume which preceded it, and in the same deeps am now translating *Homer*. But to return to St. Albans. I abode there a year and a half. Thence I went to Cambridge, where I spent a short time with my brother, in whose neighbourhood I determined, if possible, to pass the remainder of my days. He soon found me a lodging at Huntingdon. At that place I had not resided long, when I was led to an intimate connexion with a family of the name of Unwin. I soon quitted my lodging, and took up my abode with them. I had not lived long under their roof, when Mr. Unwin, as he was riding one Sunday morning to his cure at Gravely, was thrown from his horse; of which fall he died. Mrs. Unwin, having the same views of the gospel as myself, and being desirous of attending a purer ministration of it than was to be found at Huntingdon, removed to Olney, where Mr. Newton was at that time the preacher, and I with her. There we continued till Mr. Newton, whose family was the only one in the place with which we could have a connexion, and with whom we lived always on the most intimate terms, left it. After his departure, finding the situation no longer desirable, and our house threatening to fall upon our heads, we removed hither. Here we have a good house, in a most beautiful village, and, for the greatest part of the year, a most agreeable neighbourhood. Like you, madam, I stay much at home, and have not travelled twenty miles from this place and its environs, more than once these twenty years."

Five weeks later, writing to the same lady, he says:—"The melancholy that I have mentioned, and concerning which you are so kind as to enquire, is of a kind, so far as I know, peculiar to myself. *It does not at all affect the operations of my mind on any subject to which I can attach it*, whether serious or ludicrous, or whatsoever it may be; for which reason I am almost always employed, either in reading or writing, when I am not engaged in conversation. A vacant hour is my abhorrence; because, when I am not occupied, I suffer under the whole influence of my unhappy temperament."

I think the words I have italicized in the above description by Cowper of his peculiar "melancholy," go to show that this affliction was something different to common mental derangement, and this view is confirmed by what Southey tells us, that—"The sanest patient could not have observed his own symptoms more carefully, nor given a more clear and coherent account of them to his physician." This "melancholy" or "insanity" of Cowper has been variously attributed to "morbid action of the nervous system," and to his "peculiar religious views." These conditions no doubt existed and co-operated in the result; but also, and beyond these, to quote the statement of Dr. Cheever, and which expresses the poet's own conviction:—"There was a set of Border Ruffians continually threatening his peace, endeavouring to set up slavery for freedom, and ever and anon making their incursions, and defacing the title-deeds to his inheritance, which they could not carry away." In other words, while on the one hand, Cowper was the subject of many gracious Providences, on the other, like Bunyan, he seems to have been obsessed by spirits, who, playing on his highly sensitive nature, religious convictions, and awakened conscience, sought by perverting these to tempt and lure him to destruction. "Neither physical nervous derangement, nor local miasma aggravating its power, nor mistakes in the manner of its treatment, can prove that there were no assaults from malignant spiritual adversaries. . . . A thread of Divine Providence, Cowper was wont to say, ran through his whole life, and he could trace Divine interposition in every part of it; but he felt that he could also trace the malignant interference of opposing powers. Who can say" (continues Dr. Cheever) "that he and Newton" (his biographer) "were mistaken?"

In 1763, when thirty-two years of age, Cowper attempted suicide. He has fully detailed the circumstances in his Memoir. They strikingly illustrate the action of an overruling Providence in his behalf, and his extreme susceptibility to spiritual impressions—a susceptibility which goes far to explain his varying moods and sudden changes of purpose, and which, had it been investigated with a view to that end, would probably have thrown much light on the nature of his mental malady, and have afforded considerable relief to the unhappy sufferer.

He had gone to the fields, where he had intended to poison himself, when, suddenly, a thought struck him, that he might transport himself to France, and there, if necessary, find a comfortable asylum in some monastery. With this idea, he returned to his chambers, and at once commenced packing up his portmanteau, when his mind changed again, "and self-murder," he says, "*was recommended to me once more, in all its advantages.*" Fearing interruption in his chambers, he laid aside the intention

of poisoning himself, and resolved upon drowning. The sequel he thus relates:—

“For that purpose, I immediately took a coach, and ordered the man to drive to Lower Wharf, intending to throw myself into the river from the Custom House Quay. It would be strange should I omit to observe here, *how I was continually hurried away from such places as were most favourable to my design, to others, where it must be almost impossible to execute it—* from the fields, where it was improbable that anything should happen to prevent me, to the Custom House Quay, where everything of the kind was to be expected; and this *by a sudden impulse, which lasted just long enough to call me back again to my chambers, and was immediately withdrawn.* Nothing ever appeared more feasible than the project of going to France, till it had served its purpose, and then, in an instant, it appeared impracticable and absurd, even to a degree of ridicule.

“My life, which I had called my own, and claimed a right to dispose of, was kept for me by Him whose property indeed it was, and who, alone, had a right to dispose of it. This is not the only occasion on which it is proper to make this remark; others will offer themselves in the course of this narrative, so fairly, that the reader cannot overlook them.

“I left the coach upon the Lower Wharf, intending never to return to it; but upon going up to the quay, I found the water low, and a porter seated upon some goods there, as if on purpose to prevent me. This passage to the bottomless pit being mercifully shut against me, I returned back to the coach, and ordered it to return to the Temple. I drew up the shutters once more, had recourse to the laudanum, and determined to drink it off directly; but God had otherwise ordained. A conflict, that shook me to pieces, suddenly took place—not properly a trembling—but a convulsive agitation, which deprived me in a manner of the use of my limbs; and my mind was as much shaken as my body.

“Distracted between the desire of death and the dread of it, twenty times I had the phial to my mouth, *and as often received an irresistible check; and even at the time it seemed to me that an invisible hand swayed the bottle downwards as often as I set it against my lips.* I well remember that I took notice of this circumstance with some surprise, though it effected no change in my purpose. Panting for breath, and in an horrible agony, I flung myself back into the corner of the coach. A few drops of laudanum which had touched my lips, besides the fumes of it, began to leave a stupefying effect upon me. Regretting the loss of so fair an opportunity, yet utterly unable to avail myself of it, I determined not to live; and already half dead with anguish,

I once more returned to the Temple. Instantly I repaired to my room, and having shut both the outer and inner door, prepared myself for the last scene of the tragedy. I poured the laudanum into a small basin, set it on a chair by the bedside, half undressed myself, and laid down between the blankets, shuddering with horror at what I was about to perpetrate. I reproached myself bitterly with folly and rank cowardice, for having suffered the fear of death to influence me as it had done, and was filled with disdain at my own pitiful timidity; but still *something seemed to over-rule me, and to say, 'Think what you are doing. Consider, and live!'*

"At length, however, with the most confirmed resolution, I reached forth my hands towards the basin, when *the fingers of both hands were as closely contracted as if bound with cord, and became entirely useless.* Still, indeed, I could have made shift with both hands, dead and lifeless as they were, to have raised the basin to my mouth, for my arms were not at all affected; but this new difficulty struck me with wonder; *it had the air of a Divine interposition.* I lay down in my bed again to muse upon it, and while thus employed, heard the key turn in the outer door, and my laundress's husband came in. By this time the use of my fingers was restored to me. I started up hastily, dressed myself, hid the basin, and, affecting as composed an air as I could, walked out into the dining-room. In a few minutes I was left alone; and now, unless God had evidently interposed for my preservation, I should certainly have done execution upon myself, having a whole afternoon before me.

"Both the man and his wife having gone out, outward obstructions were no sooner removed than new ones arose within. The man had just shut the door behind him, when *the convincing Spirit came upon me,* and a total alteration in my sentiments took place. The horror of the crime was immediately *exhibited to me* in so strong a light, that, being seized with a kind of furious indignation, I snatched up the basin, poured away the laudanum into a phial of foul water, and not content with that, flung the phial out of the window. This impulse having served the present purpose, *was withdrawn.*

"I spent the rest of the day in a kind of stupid insensibility, undetermined as to the manner of dying, but still bent on self-murder, as the only possible deliverance. That sense of the enormity of the crime, which I had just experienced, had entirely left me. . . . I went to bed to take, as I thought, my last sleep in this world. . . . I slept as usual, and awoke about three o'clock. Immediately I arose, and by the help of a rush-light, found my pen-knife, took it into bed with me, and lay for some hours with it pointed directly against my heart. Twice or thrice I placed it

upright under my left breast, leaning all my weight upon it; but the point was broken off square, and it would not penetrate.

"In this manner the time passed till the day began to break. I heard the clock strike seven, and instantly it occurred to me, there was no time to be lost; the chambers would soon be opened, and my friend would call upon me to take me with him to Westminster. 'Now is the time,' thought I. 'This is the crisis—no more dallying with the love of life!' I arose, and as I thought, bolted the inner door of my chambers, but was mistaken; my touch deceived me, and I left it as I found it. My preservation, indeed, as it will appear, did not depend upon that incident; but I mention it to shew that the good providence of God watched over me, to keep open every way of deliverance, that nothing might be left to hazard.

"Not one hesitating thought now remained, but I fell greedily to the execution of my purpose. My garter was made of a broad piece of scarlet binding, with a sliding buckle, being sewn together at the ends. By the help of the buckle, I formed a noose, and I fixed it about my neck, straining it so tight that it hardly left a passage for my breath or the blood to circulate; the tongue of the buckle held it fast. At each corner of the bed was placed a wreath of carved work, fastened by an iron pin, which passed up through the midst of it. The other part of the garter, which made a loop, I slipped over one of these, and hung by it some seconds, drawing up my feet under me that they might not touch the floor; but the iron bent, and the carved work slipped off, and the garter with it. I then fastened it to the frame of the tester, winding it round, and tying it in a strong knot. The frame broke short, and let me down again.

"The third effort was more likely to succeed. I set the door open which reached within a foot of the ceiling—by the help of a chair I could command the top of it, and the loop being large enough to admit a large angle of the door, was easily fixed so as not to slip off again. I pushed away the chair with my feet, and hung at my whole length. While I hung there *I distinctly heard a voice say, three times, 'Tis over!'* Though *I am sure of the fact, and was so at the time*, yet it did not at all alarm me or affect my resolution. I hung so long that I lost all sense—all consciousness of existence.

"When I came to myself again, I thought myself in hell; the sound of my own dreadful groans was all that I heard, and a feeling like that produced by a flash of lightning just beginning to seize upon me, passed over my whole body. In a few seconds I found myself fallen on my face to the floor. In about half a minute I recovered my feet; and reeling, and staggering, stumbled into bed again.

"By the blessed providence of God, the garter, which had held me till the bitterness of temporal death was past, broke just before eternal death had taken place upon me. The stagnation of blood under one eye, in a broad crimson spot, and a red circle round my neck, shewed plainly that I had been on the brink of eternity. The latter, indeed, might have been caused by the pressure of the garter; but the former was certainly the effect of strangulation, for it was not attended with the sensation of a bruise, as it must have been, had I in my fall received one in so tender a part. And I rather think the circle round my neck was owing to the same cause, for the part was not excoriated, nor at all in pain.

"Soon after I got into bed, I was surprised to hear a noise in the dining-room, where the laundress was lighting a fire; she had found the door unbolted, notwithstanding my design to fasten it, and must have passed the bed-chamber door while I was hanging on it, and yet never perceived me. She heard me fall, and presently came to ask me if I was well; adding, she feared I had been in a fit."

In 1773, Cowper had the presentiment of a recurrence of his sad mental affliction, and this led him, during a solitary walk in the fields, to compose that most popular of his hymns, commencing—

"God moves in a mysterious way,—"

and, at about the same time, the hymn entitled, "Temptation:"—

"The billows swell, the winds are high,
Clouds overcast my wintry sky;
Out of the depths to Thee I call,
My fears are great, my strength is small."

His presentiment was but too well founded, though the attempt he made at self-destruction in the October of that year was happily averted. In 1787 he again attempted suicide, and would have effected it, if Mrs. Unwin had not providentially entered the place in which he had suspended himself by the neck, and if she had not possessed sufficient presence of mind to cut him down.

Hayley has remarked how providentially friend after friend was raised up for Cowper as he needed them, and that in his darkest seasons of calamity he was never without some affectionate attendant; and Alexander Knox, in his *Letter on Divine Providence*, refers to Cowper as an instance in which it is almost impossible for a discriminating mind not to recognize the marks of a special Providence. Cowper was himself a firm believer in special Providences. In a letter to the Rev. William Unwin, from Olney, May 27, 1782, he writes:—"We are glad that you are safe at home again. Could we see at one glance of the eye what is passing every day upon all the roads in the kingdom we should indeed find reason to be thankful for journeys performed in safety,

and for deliverance from dangers we are not perhaps even permitted to see. When, in some of the high southern latitudes, and in a dark tempestuous night, a flash of lightning discovered to Captain Cook a vessel, which glanced along close by his side, and which but for the lightning he must have run foul of—both the danger and the transient light that shewed it were undoubtedly designed to convey to him this wholesome instruction, that a particular Providence attended him, and that he was not only preserved from evils of which he had no notice, but from many more of which he had no information, or even the least suspicion. What unlikely contingencies may nevertheless take place! How improbable that two ships should dash against each other in the midst of the vast Pacific Ocean, and that, steering contrary courses from parts of the world so immensely distant from each other, they should yet move so exactly in a line as to clash, fill, and go to the bottom, in a sea where all the ships in the world might be so dispersed as that none should see another! Yet this must have happened but for the remarkable interference which he has recorded. The same Providence indeed might as easily have conducted them so wide of each other that they should never have met at all, but then this lesson would have been lost; at least, the heroic voyager would have encompassed the globe, without having had occasion to relate an incident that so naturally suggests it.”

On the subject of Dreams, in a letter to Lady Heskett, dated January 18th, 1787, Cowper writes:—“Mrs. Carter thinks on the subject of dreams, as everybody else does, that is to say, according to her own experience. She has had no extraordinary ones, and therefore accounts them only the ordinary operations of the fancy. Mine are of a texture that will not suffer me to ascribe them to so inadequate a cause, *or to any cause but the operation of an exterior agency.* I have a mind, my dear (and to you, I will venture to boast of it), as free from superstition as any man living, neither do I give heed to dreams in general as predictive, though particular dreams I believe to be so. Some very sensible persons, and I suppose Mrs. Carter among them, will acknowledge that, in old times, God spoke by dreams, but affirm, with much boldness, that He has since ceased to do so. If you ask them why, they answer, ‘Because He has now revealed his will in Scripture, and there is no longer any need that He should instruct or admonish us by dreams.’ I grant, that with respect to doctrines and precepts, He has left us in want of nothing; but has He thereby precluded Himself in any of the operations of His providence? Surely not. It is perfectly a different consideration; and *the same need that there ever was of His interference in this way, there is still, and ever must be while*

man continues blind and fallible, and a creature beset with dangers which he can neither foresee nor obviate. His operations, however, of this kind are, I allow, very rare; and as to the generality of dreams, they are made of such stuff, and are in themselves so insignificant, that though I believe them all to be the manufacture of others, not our own, I account it not a farthing matter who manufactures them. So much for dreams!"

Cowper gave entire credit to what Southey calls "audible illusions;" but which the poet himself regarded as voices from the spirit-world, and which were heard more particularly by him on waking in the morning or in the night.* He says, "Satan plied me close with horrible visions and still more horrible voices." Other visions and voices were, however, not of this painful kind, and were attributed by him to a very different spiritual source." While at Huntingdon he became exceeding anxious to find a place in Mr. Unwin's family as a boarder, at the same time he blamed himself "for want of submission to the Lord's will;" but contrived at length to fasten his thoughts upon a theme which had no connexion with it. He says:—"While I was pursuing my meditations, Mr. Unwin and family quite out of sight, my attention was suddenly called home again by the words which had been continually playing in my mind, and were at length repeated with such importunity, that I could not help regarding them,—'The Lord God of truth will do this.' *I was effectually convinced that they were not of my own production*, and accordingly I received from them some assurance of success; but my unbelief robbed me of much of the comfort they were intended to convey, though *I have since had many a blessed experience of the same kind*, for which I can never be sufficiently thankful. I im-

* The following in *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, bears upon this subject:—

"He (Dr. Johnson) mentioned a thing as not unfrequent, of which I had never heard before—being *called*—that is, hearing one's name pronounced by the voice at a great distance, far beyond the possibility of being reached by any sounds uttered by human organs. An acquaintance on whose veracity I can depend, told me, that walking home one evening to Kilmarnock, he heard himself *called* from a wood, by the voice of a brother who had gone to America; and the next packet brought an account of that brother's death. Maclean asserted that this inexplicable *calling* was a thing very well known. Dr. Johnson said, that one day at Oxford, as he was turning the key of his chamber, he heard his mother distinctly call '*Sam!*' She was then at Lichfield; but nothing ensued. 'This phenomena' (Boswell adds) 'is, I think, as wonderful as any other mysterious fact which many people are very slow to believe, or, rather, indeed, reject with an obstinate contempt.'"

Mrs. Piozzi relates the same story of Johnson, with only a difference of date. In a conversation he had with her, which, says the lady, "I well remember," Dr. Johnson said "It was a long time after my poor mother's death." "I relate the anecdote," says Mrs. Piozzi, "precisely as he told it me; but could not prevail upon him to draw out the talk into length for further satisfaction of my curiosity."

mediately began to negotiate the affair, and in a few days it was entirely concluded."

Both Cowper and Mrs. Unwin regarded Mr. Teedon, the school-master of Olney, "as one favoured with spiritual communications,"* and Cowper frequently consulted and corresponded with this humble friend concerning his dreams, voices, impressions and other spiritual experiences. In a letter dated October 3rd, 1792, he writes to him:—"I never wake without hearing words that are a poniard in my bosom, and the pain of which I feel all the day. Mrs. Unwin's approaching and sudden death the constant subject of them."

Again, Dec. 29, 1792, he writes to Teedon:—"My nights are almost all haunted with notices of great affliction at hand,—of what kind I know not; but in degree such as I shall with extreme difficulty sustain, and hardly at last find deliverance. At four this morning I started out of a dream, in which I seemed sitting before the fire, and very close to it, in great trouble; when suddenly stamping violently with my foot, and springing suddenly from my seat, I awoke, and heard these words,—'*I hope the Lord will carry me through it.*'"

Jan. 1, 1793, he writes to Teedon:—"This morning I am in rather a more cheerful frame of mind than usual, having had two notices of a more comfortable cast than the generality of mine. I waked, saying, '*I shall perish.*'" which was *immediately answered by a vision of a wine glass, and the words, 'A whole glass,'* in allusion no doubt to the famous story of Mrs. Honeywood."†

In another communication to the same friend, March 14, 1793, he says:—"A temporary suspension of terror was audibly announced to me some time since, and except in one or two

* He writes to Teedon, Dec. 4th, 1792. "Dear Sir—In your last experience, ordinary as it was, I found nothing presumptuous. God is free to manifest Himself both in manner and measure as he pleases; and to you he is pleased to manifest Himself uncommonly in both. It would be better with poor me, if being the subject of so many of your manifestations (for which I desire to be thankful both to God and you), I were made, in some small degree, at least, partaker of the comfort of them."

† This "famous story" is related by Fuller. Mrs. Honeywood, of Charing, in Kent, being much troubled in conscience, many ministers repaired to her, among others, the Rev. John Fox, who tried to comfort her but without effect; "insomuch that, in the agony of her soul, having a Venice glass in her hand, she brake forth into this expression:—'*I am as surely damned as this glass is broken,*' which she immediately threw with great violence to the ground; the glass rebounded again, and was taken up whole and entire." Fuller adds:—"However, the gentlewoman took no comfort hereat, but continued a long time after in her former disconsolate condition, without any amendment; until at last, God, the great Clock-Keeper of Time, who findeth out the fittest minutes for his own mercies, suddenly shot comfort, like lightning, into her soul; which, once entered, ever remained therein, so that she led the remainder of her life in spiritual gladness. This she herself told to the Rev. Father Thomas Morton, Bishop of Durham, from whose mouth I have received this relation."

instances has been fulfilled." This interval was not however of long continuance; and he informs Teedon that the return of these terrible impressions had been announced to him in these words:—"I have got my old wakings again."

The words which came to his inward ear, and which words Southey says, "he considered as oracular," did not always however bear upon his religious state. Thus, Feb. 22, 1793, he writes:—"I waked the other morning with these words distinctly spoken to me:—'*Charles the Second, though he was or wished to be accounted a man of fine taste and an admirer of the arts, never saw or expressed a wish to see the man whom he would have found alone superior to all the race of men.*'" Two days later he writes to Hayley an account of a beautiful dream, in which Milton appeared to him:—"I spoke of his *Paradise Lost*, as every man must who is worthy to speak of it at all, and told him a long story of the manner in which it affected me, when I first discovered it, being at that time a school-boy. He answered me by a smile, and a gentle inclination of his head. He then grasped my hand affectionately, and with a smile that charmed me, said:—'Well, you for your part will do well also.' His person, his features, his manner, were all so perfectly characteristic, that I am persuaded an apparition of him could not represent him more perfectly."

Cowper manifests a deep interest in the subject of spiritual communion, though, except with regard to his own chiefly painful experiences, he does not seem to have had those clear and decided convictions to which, had he lived in the greater light which later and larger experiences have given, he would probably, to his own great comfort, have attained. Who can forget those lines "On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture:"—

"My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss!"

In a letter to the Rev. William Unwin, Jan. 1784, he breaks out into the following series of questions:—"What are the employments of the departed spirit? and where does it subsist? Has it any cognizance of earthly things? Is it transported to an immeasurable distance: or is it still, though imperceptible to us, conversant with the same scenes, and interested in what passes here? How little we know of a state to which we are all destined; and how does the obscurity that hangs over that undiscovered country increase the anxiety we sometimes feel as we are journeying towards it."

In a letter to the Rev. John Newton, May 28, 1781, he says:

"If you could spend a day now and then in those forests (in Africa), and return with a wish to England, it would be no small addition to the number of your best pleasures. But *pennæ non homini datæ*. The time will come, perhaps (but death will come first), when you will be able to visit them without either danger, trouble, or expense; and when the contemplation of those well-remembered scenes will awaken in you emotions of gratitude and praise, surpassing all you could possibly sustain at present. In this sense, I suppose, there is a heaven upon earth at all times, and that the disembodied spirit may find a peculiar joy, arising from the contemplation of those places it was formerly conversant with, and so far, at least, be reconciled to a world it was once so weary of, as to use it in the delightful way of thankful recollection."

In a letter to the Rev. John Newton, June 23, 1780, he says:—"Man often prophecies without knowing it; *a spirit speaks by him which is not his own*, though he does not at that time suspect that he is under the influence of any other."

On a kindred subject—Apparitions, he writes to the Rev. William Unwin:—"Olney, Nov. 24, 1781. My dear Friend,—News is always acceptable, especially from another world. I cannot tell you what has been done in the Chesapeake, but I can tell you what has passed in West Wycombe, in this county. Do you feel disposed to give credit to the story of an apparition? 'No,' say you. I am of your mind. I do not believe more than one in a hundred of those tales with which old women frighten children. But you are not such a philosopher, I suppose, as to have persuaded yourself that an apparition is an impossible thing. You can attend to a story of that sort, if well authenticated? 'Yes.' Then I can tell you one.

"You have heard no doubt of the romantic friendship that subsisted once between Paul Whitehead and Lord le Despenser, the late Sir Francis Dashwood. When Paul died he left his lordship a legacy. It was his heart which was taken out of his body and sent, as directed. His friend . . . rested satisfied with what he had done, and supposed his friend would rest. But not so—about a week since I received a letter from a person who cannot have been misinformed, telling me that Paul has appeared frequently of late, and that there are few, if any, of his lordship's numerous household, who have not seen him; sometimes in the park, sometimes in the garden, as well as in the house—by day and by night indifferently. I make no reflection upon this incident, having other things to write about and but little room."

Concerning the recognition and communication between friends in heaven, Cowper writes to his cousin, Mrs. Cowper, April 18, 1766:—"Reason seems to require it so peremptorily, that society without social intercourse seems to be a solecism and

a contradiction in terms, and the inhabitants of these regions are called, you know, in Scripture, an innumerable *company*, and an *assembly*, which seems to convey the idea of society as clearly as the word itself. Human testimony weighs but little in matters of this sort, but let it have all the weight it can. I know no greater names in divinity than Watts and Doddridge. They were both of this opinion, and I send you the words of the latter.

“Our *companions in glory* may probably assist us by their wise and good observations, when we come to make the providence of God here upon earth, under the guidance and direction of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the subject of our mutual converse.*”

In a letter to the same lady, Sept. 3, 1766, he thus resumes the subject:—“I am not sorry that what I have said concerning our knowledge of each other in a future state, has a little inclined you to the affirmative. For though the redeemed of the Lord shall be sure of being as happy in that state, as infinite power employed by infinite goodness can make them, and therefore it may seem immaterial whether we shall, or shall not recollect each other hereafter; yet our *present* happiness at least is a little interested in the question. A parent, a friend, a wife, must needs, I think, feel a little heartache at the thought of an eternal separation from the objects of her regard, and not to know them when she meets them in another life, or never to meet them at all, amounts though not altogether, yet nearly to the same thing. Remember them, I think she needs must. To hear that they are happy, will indeed be no small addition to her own felicity; but to see them so will surely be a greater.”

The last years of Cowper's life were spent, so far as his sad affliction permitted, in the society of friends, in rural occupations, and in literary pursuits. Though none, perhaps, ever felt more terrible apprehensions than he in passing through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, it is pleasing to know that when the last hour came, his long lamentable delusion—that he was eternally lost beyond hope of salvation and Divine mercy, was at length dispelled.* “He died as calmly as a sleeping infant, in the afternoon of the 25th of April, 1800, and from that moment the expression into which the countenance settled was observed by his loving relative ‘to be that of calmness and composure, mingled as it were, with holy surprise;’ and he regarded this as an index of the last thoughts and enjoyments of his soul, in its gradual

* No wonder that this horrible idea which had fastened on his mind (however it may have originated), brought it into such a state, that his experiences, as he was fully aware, could not be otherwise than painful. Even Nature became a blank to him. In a letter to Lady Heskett, in 1798, he says:—“My state of mind is a medium through which the beauties of Paradise itself could not be communicated with any effect but a painful one.”

escape from the depths of that inscrutable despair in which it had been so long shrouded."*

And here I may fitly introduce some of the spiritual experiences of Cowper's intimate friend and biographer—the Rev. John Newton, who, as he tells us in the epitaph he wrote for himself, was "once an infidel and libertine," but by a series of remarkable Providences, which he relates in his Autobiography, was converted to, and an earnest preacher of, the faith he had denied in principle and in practice.

When about twelve years of age, he was thrown within a few inches of a hedge-row newly cut down. He got no hurt, "but could not avoid," he says, "taking notice of a gracious Providence in my deliverance; for had I fallen upon the stakes I had inevitably been killed." Soon after this he was roused by the loss of an intimate companion. "We had agreed," he says, "to go on board a man-of-war, but I providentially came too late; the boat was upset, and he and several others were drowned. I was invited to the funeral of my play-fellow, and was exceedingly affected, to think that by a delay of a few minutes, (which had much displeased and angered me till I saw the event), my life had been preserved." In relating another instance of what he regarded as Providential interposition, he says:—"This was one of the many critical turns of my life, in which the Lord was pleased to display his providence and care, by causing many unsuspected circumstances to concur in almost an instant of time. These sudden opportunities were several times repeated—each of them brought me into an entire new scene of action; and they were usually delayed to almost the last moment in which they could have taken place."

In narrating a very remarkable dream, which is too long to transcribe here, he remarks:—"It is needless for me either to enter upon a discussion of the nature of dreams in general, or to make an apology for recording my own. Those who acknowledge Scripture, will allow that there have been monitory and supernatural dreams, evident communications from heaven, either directing or foretelling future events; and those who are acquainted with the history and experience of the people of God, are well assured that such intimations have not been totally withheld in any period down to the present times. Reason, far from contradicting this supposition, strongly pleads for it, where the process of reasoning is rightly understood and carefully pursued. So that a late eminent writer (Baxter, *On the Vis Inertiæ*), who, I presume is not generally charged with enthusiasm, undertakes to prove, that the phenomenon of dreaming is inexplicable at least,

* Cheever's *William Cowper: His Life, Genius, and Insanity*.

if not absolutely impossible, without taking in the agency and intervention of spiritual beings, to us invisible. I would refer the incredulous to him. For my own part, I can say, without scruple, 'The dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.' I am sure I dreamed to the following effect, and cannot doubt from what I have seen since, that it had a direct and easy application to my own circumstances to the dangers into which I was about to plunge myself, and to the unmerited deliverance and mercy which God would be pleased to offer me in the time of my distress."

Newton spent several years of his life at sea, during which he suffered many hardships, and had many remarkable deliverances from imminent peril. For instance, when at a place called Rio Cestos, he was daily in the habit of going up the river, loading, and returning in the morning. He tells us that, "One day, having dined on board, I was preparing to return to the river as formerly; I had taken leave of the captain, received his orders, was ready in the boat, and was just going to put off as we term it—that is, to let go our ropes, and sail from the ship. At that instant the captain came up from the cabin, and called me on board again. I went, expecting further orders, but he said he had taken it into his head (as he phrased it) that I should remain that day in the ship, and accordingly he ordered another man to go in my room. I was surprised at this, as the boat had never been sent away without me before; and asked him the reason. He could give me no reason but as above, that so he would have it. Accordingly the boat went without me, but returned no more. She sunk that night in the river, and the person who had supplied my place was drowned. I was much struck when we received news of the event the next morning. The captain himself, though quite a stranger to religion, so far as to deny a particular Providence, could not help being affected; but he declared that he had no other reason for countermanding me at that time, but that it came suddenly into his mind to detain me!"

Speaking of a voyage to Guinea, he says:—"In the course of this voyage I was wonderfully preserved in the midst of many obvious and many unforeseen dangers. At one time there was a conspiracy among my own people to turn pirates, and take the ship from me. When the plot was nearly ripe, and they waited only a convenient opportunity, two of those concerned in it were taken ill one day; one of them died, and he was the only person I buried while on board. This suspended the affair, and opened a way to its discovery, or the consequences might have been fatal. The slaves on board were likewise frequently plotting insurrections, and were sometimes upon the very brink of mischief; but it was always disclosed in due time. When I have thought myself most secure, I have been suddenly alarmed with danger; and

when I have almost despaired of life, as sudden a deliverance has been vouchsafed me. My stay upon the coast was long, the trade very precarious; and in the pursuit of my business, both on board and on shore, I was in deaths often. Let the following instance serve as a specimen. I was at a place called Mana, near Cape Mount, where I had transacted very large concerns; and had, at the time I am speaking of, some debts and accounts to settle, which required my attendance on shore, and I intended to go on the next morning. When I arose I left the ship according to my purpose; but when I came near the shore, the surf or breach of the sea ran so high, that I was almost afraid to attempt landing. Indeed, I had often ventured at a worse time; but I felt an inward hindrance and backwardness, which I could not account for. The surf furnished a pretext for indulging it, and after waiting and hesitating for about half an hour, I returned to the ship without doing my business, which I think I never did but that morning, in all the time I used that trade. But I soon perceived the reason of all this. It seems, the day before I intended to land, a scandalous and groundless charge had been laid against me, by whose instigation I could never learn, which greatly threatened my honour and interest, both in Africa and England, and would perhaps, humanly speaking, have affected my life, if I had landed according to my intention. The person most concerned owed me about a hundred pounds, which he sent me in a huff, and otherwise, perhaps, would not have paid me at all. I was very uneasy for a few hours, but was soon afterwards comforted. I heard no more of my accusation till the next voyage; and then it was publicly acknowledged to be a malicious calumny, without the least shadow of a ground."

A Continuation of Mr. Newton's Life was written by the Rev. Richard Cecil, in the course of which he remarks:—"We cannot wonder that Mr. Newton latterly retained a strong impression of a particular Providence superintending and conducting the steps of man, since he was so often reminded of it in his own history. The following occurrence is one of many instances. Mr. Newton, after his reformation, was remarkable for his punctuality. I remember his often sitting with his watch in his hand, lest he should fail in keeping his next engagement. This exactness with respect to time, it seems, was his habit, while occupying his post at Liverpool. One day, however, some business had so detained him, that he came to his boat much later than usual, to the surprise of those who had observed his former punctuality. He went out in the boat, as heretofore, to inspect a ship, but the ship blew up just before he reached her. It appears, that if he had left the shore a few minutes sooner, he must have perished with the rest on board."

T. S.

A MYSTERIOUS AFFAIR.

WE have often read of trials having taken place at the instance of ghosts, and it is just possible that one may again occur owing to the alleged revelations of an invisible spirit. The following are the facts which we have heard; we state them as we have had them from those who we believe have no wish to deceive, but we leave the reader to draw his own inference:—Dr. —,* residing in the neighbourhood of Bristol, had a son educated in his own profession, who received a medical appointment abroad. A few months ago the son resolved to return to England, and sailed by a British vessel bound for the port of London, undertaking to give his services as medical man in return for his passage. When, however, the ship was on its way home, the young surgeon, after a short illness, died, the captain of the vessel on reaching London communicated with Dr. —, and gave him an account of his son's death, handing him £22, which he said the latter had at the time of his demise; he also gave Dr. — what he stated was a copy of the ship's log, in which all the circumstances were regularly given. Dr. — was so pleased with the captain's conduct that he made him a present of a gold pencil-case as a proof of his gratitude for kindness to his son. A few months after this Dr. —, who, from being quite a sceptic in Spiritualism and spirit-rapping, is now a believer in both, was with his wife at a *séance* of Spiritualists in London, when a great agitation amongst the furniture of the room and other symptoms of spiritual disturbance were noticed, upon which the medium, who was a lady, stated that the apartment was full of spirits, and that the unseen visitors were evidently desirous of making a communication to some one of the company. The medium was then asked to request that the spirit or spirits would give some indication of the person present with whom they wished to communicate. Upon this a large table, without any apparent agency, was violently moved from the other side of the room, falling on its top close to Dr. —. The spirit was then required, according to the usual fashion, to state who it was, when it rapped out the name of Dr. —'s deceased son, who had died at sea, and who, to the terror of all present, intimated that he had died from poison. Dr. —, wishing to ascertain whether he was or was not deceived, asked the spirit for some evidence of its reality, upon which the unseen visitor intimated the nature of the present which Dr. had given to the captain, and which he believed could have been known to no one present. Dr. — then asked if the poisoning was intentional, and the spirit rapped out that it might

* Dr. James G. Davey, Norwood's Lunatic Asylum, near Bristol.

or might not be : a discrepancy, of course, noticed by more than one present. The spirit, however, proceeded to say that he had left £70, when he died ; whereas Dr. — only got £22 : other particulars were entered into, and altogether Dr. — was so impressed with the revelations that he paid a visit to the wife of the captain of the vessel, who had remained in London, and from whom it was elicited that her husband had stated to her that he feared Dr. —'s son was poisoned, and that, instead of getting peppermint with some castor-oil when he was ill, he got prussic acid. A copy of the log was obtained from the owners of the ship, and Dr. — found it differed most materially from that handed to him by the captain of the vessel. There were other mysterious circumstances connected with the affair, which we are not at liberty to state, but altogether such strange secrets transpired, and there was something so unsatisfactory about the narrative given by the captain, when it came to be scrutinized, that Dr. —, we hear, has been induced to consult an eminent criminal lawyer, with a view to ulterior proceedings. We give the circumstances without expressing any opinion of our own. We may, however, add that Dr. —, who resides in the neighbourhood of Bristol, is a man of the highest professional and personal respectability. — *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* of October 10th.

SPIRITUAL SPHERES AND ATMOSPHERES.

THOUGH I have never attended a *séance*, and confess to a strong feeling of danger in seeking the physical communications of which I have heard and read, I am a believer in Spiritualism. I have, however, for some years, been an observer of a class of phenomena more open, than those which occur at *séances*, to general observation, and I feel confident that many readers of this periodical are also more or less conversant with these phenomena, and some of them will probably be able to add much to our knowledge on an obscure class of subjects, very suitable, as I believe, for ventilation in the pages of the *Spiritual Magazine*.

That great seer of the last century, Emanuel Swedenborg, says, that every thing and being, natural or spiritual, has its own peculiar sphere, which is nothing else than the radiation and out-flowing of its vital forces. Just as the earth is surrounded by and bathed in an atmosphere which consists of gaseous particles of the substances composing the body of the earth itself, and as the sun is densely wrapped in an atmosphere of light and heat, which fills the whole solar system with its beneficent influence, and makes of it a glorious symbol of God, the great Life-Giver —so every other created thing has its own sphere of influence,

greater or smaller, and infuses something of its own quality into all things within its range.

These spheres or atmospheres, moreover, are not merely accidental in the qualities they manifest. They are composed of the most active and potent elements of the emitting thing or being. As in the atmosphere of the earth, a large proportion of which is the life-sustaining oxygen, and which contains only minute portions of carbon or the more inert elements composing the mass of the earth—and as in that of the sun, which sends through the universe the creating and stimulating light and heat, so with all other things. And to rise, with reverent steps, to the source of the Divine light and heat; the Holy Spirit, coming from the Father of Lights, through the glorious person of Jesus Christ, is the Divine atmosphere of light and love, giving life to men.

There are multitudes of facts which strongly favour this theory. But at present I will select only a few circumstances illustrative of the view, rather than enter into any attempt at systematic proof of it. It might be a very interesting and not unprofitable enquiry, which should endeavour to discover what are the spiritual conditions which affect the healthiness of different localities, giving to some a notoriety for disease, and to others a reputation which attracts numerous invalids in search of health. Confessedly, very little is known of the causes of these differences. I believe no variations in the chemical constituents of the air have been discovered which can throw any light upon them. And some localities have been, in the course of ages, subject to very remarkable changes in this respect.

The Roman Campagna is a striking instance of deterioration of climate. Anciently, this district was one of the most populous and fruitful regions of Europe. At present, with a fertile soil and a temperature in which the finest fruits might grow, human dwellers are driven away by the terrible malaria. Herds of cattle breed upon its rich pastures, tended by a few sickly men, who live in miserable wigwags during winter and spring, and in the summer flee for their lives into the mountains. The invisible Death creeps into the city of Rome itself, and every year there is a greater number of deaths than births within its walls, the population being kept up only by the constant influx of strangers. And, as if to set at nought the theories of scientific men, the healthiest quarter of the city—in which the proportion of deaths to population is the smallest—is the abominably filthy and crowded Ghetto; the Jews' quarter—a district hardly to be matched, for squalor and dirt, elsewhere in Europe—and lying in the lowest part of the city, on the banks of the Tiber. Modern science suggests bad drainage as one cause of this malaria, but I did not perceive any good reason for this notion on the occasion of a recent visit.

The country is beautifully undulating, and very little of it marshy. The people of the country allege that if the land were well planted with trees, it would be cured. This seems to me more probable. But the want of trees appears to me rather to be a kindred result of the same underlying spiritual cause, than, as itself, the cause of the malaria. That spiritual cause appears to me to be closely connected with the spiritual state of the inhabitants and the rulers. Rome has, for many ages, been the chief seat of that great power, which tries to bind the human race hand and foot with the chains of a spiritual despotism, in the name of Christ. The holiest things have been used as the means by which this great spiritual power has sought to enslave mankind. Would it be wonderful if the smoke of that pit which yawns here to swallow up the world, should poison not only the spiritual, but through that, also the natural atmosphere; and that fair and genial as are the land and the climate to the cursory visitor, a subtle virus should impregnate the air, and spiritual death should work out also into natural death? I say this with no bitterness of feeling for the men who are at the head of the Romish Church. Nor do I mean to say that the Romish is intrinsically worse than any Protestant section of Christendom. Almost any one of these, if it had the power and influence of Rome, would, with its own dogmatic tests of orthodoxy, become equally oppressive. I think it possible that, with all its corruptions, the Romish Church may possess more Divine truth than any single Protestant sect of Christendom. It has never given up its belief in the continuance of miraculous power in the Church, and hence it has never descended to the same depths of materialism and unbelief, as Protestantism. But its grasping after power has made it a vast engine of corruption, magnetized from beneath, and moved by an intelligence which does not appear on the surface.

In the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses foretells, just before his death, the blessings and the calamities which the Israelites would experience in the event of obedience or of wickedness. I will not stop to reply to any narrow critical spirit, who shall enquire whether Moses really uttered these words. Whoever wrote them, they are the words of one who could perceive, with a prophet's vision, the working of spiritual causes, outwards from the spiritual into the natural world. A rude people, such as were the Israelites, who saw only phenomena, could only be addressed in language such as that which the prophet uses. Reward or punishment is attributed to the immediate hand of God—His blessing or His curse. In truth, the things foretold would follow, in the established order of the universe, as necessary, unchangeable results of their own lives. Obedience would open heaven with

all its blessings, in every degree or phase of life; in the political state—order, peace, good government; in the social state—industry, unity, prosperity, increase of population, contentment; in the very land and climate—healthfulness, abundance, beauty. Disobedience was idolatry with them, and this was but another name, in their case, for debauchery and gross sensualism. (For the idolatry of the Asiatics, and specially of the Canaanitish nations, was incredibly immoral and corrupting.) Idolatry, then, would, to the seer's eye, bring indolence, corruption, bad government, national weakness, subjugation to foreign enemies, famine, pestilence,—and at length the curse would blight the very atmosphere they breathed, and bring forth plagues of locusts, serpents, wild beasts, diseases, and barrenness in the soil. Unfortunately we have become so wise during the last century or two that we can no longer believe in curses resting on certain things or places. Even Christians, with the Bible in one hand and *Keith on the Prophecies* in the other, showing how the old prophecies have been fulfilled in the desolation which now sits upon the Ancient Babylon, will smile at what they call the superstition that believes it possible for a curse to hang over the splendid marbles and the wondrous ruins of that city which they call the modern Babylon.

To come to more common-place observations,—probably most intelligent people have become aware that on entering into conversation with certain persons, they have felt a kind of restraint which has almost quite prevented the expression of their thoughts. Without any feeling of timidity, or even any high respect for the individual whom they addressed, it has seemed that their ordinary flow of thought and speech were obstructed. Again and again, with the same people, they have experienced the same result—hesitancy and confusion of thought. But, on turning to some other person, they would find perfect ease of expression and lucidness of thought. The required word has come at the right moment, and they have been almost surprised at their own happiness of expression.

This easy flow of thought and word in the company of an associate makes for us one of the highest charms of his society. Doubtless it arises from a spiritual affinity which promotes the mutual communication and blending of thought and sympathies. Without it there may be esteem, but there can scarcely be that union of soul to which we give the name of friendship. In the opposite condition there is antagonism, like that between oil and water. Each feels and avoids the outgoing spherical efflux which the other gives out, but the repulsion and avoidance are deeper than the consciousness.

Sometimes in spending an evening in the company of friends, one finds an atmosphere so genial that every one is drawn out so

as to eclipse his ordinary condition, and beam with kindness, intelligence, and grace. Such an evening becomes to us a revelation of what is possible in social intercourse. At other times there is a frosty stiffness which no effort avails to break through. Every individual present seems to sink below his average condition. Is it not reasonable to suppose, in such cases, that the spheres of the individuals composing the company, by their harmony or discord, either intensify or frustrate the enjoyment of the occasion?

Every one must have observed, too, how contagious are the influences of certain individuals. A single person will sometimes stamp his own character or mood on every other person present, for the time. It may be combative, and then there is ceaseless argumentation,—it may be calm and gentle, and then there is a prevalent blandness and quiet,—or it may be mirthful, and then there is an insuppressible spirit of fun which brims over into loud laughter. Grave persons, carried away by the infection, will afterwards wonder at the trifles which had then seemed to them so full of humour.

That large assemblages may be electrified or magnetized with the same sentiments, is no new discovery. So dangerous and uncontrollable is the public meeting, indeed, that there are few countries where it is permitted. By the greater part of European governments it is not allowed, except under very rigorous restrictions, and with certain carefully defined objects in view. And, in our own country, how many men, after being present at a meeting, have wondered at themselves, marvelling how they could have been so intensely excited on such an occasion. But it is explained if one perceives that the leaders, who inflame the rest, have been previously under furnace-blasts of excitement, until they have come to a white heat, and then, as mediums, pour forth on the spiritual and natural atmospheres, the stream of influx of which they were recipient, to be absorbed by those who were in a neutral or receptive condition.

The power wielded by an orator is, doubtless, chiefly of the magnetic kind. It is one of the fallacies of an age of mere intellectualism and unbelief to suppose that the influence of an eloquent speaker is due only to the effect of his thoughts, his choice of words, and suitableness of gesture. It is true, these are channels by which he sends forth, through the senses of his hearers, a flood of influence. But the true orator unconsciously fascinates his auditors. As he proceeds, each wandering eye and mind is gradually drawn, fixed, rivetted on him. Their souls are knit to his in secret sympathy, the union takes place in a region of being far deeper than that of speech or thought—the region of feeling—he carries them along, so that they seem to think out side by side with him, his own conclusions. Though he seems to

sway them at his will, they do not feel themselves to be swayed. They feel free as he, because they have entered into the same deep and broad stream of life, and together, with him, they are borne along it irresistibly, honouring him because he expresses fully that which they feel. Hence, also, the unmeasured and incalculable power of an earnest man, as compared with an indifferent or insincere one. He who repeats the strongest arguments or persuasives at second-hand, however cleverly, is wanting in the secret magnetic power of the one whose whole soul lives in the subject. He lacks the "thoughts that breathe and words that burn."

Every public assembly has its special spiritual atmosphere. One may sometimes enter a church or chapel in which one feels, if such a thing can be, an atmosphere of death. Spiritually, preacher and people are mummies. The words one hears are unmeaning as the rumbling of wheels above the hollow darkness of a tomb. It is almost impossible to pray there, and even the Bible itself seems dead; its solemn and wonderful words sound like distant voices to a dreamer, making him sleep uneasily without awaking him. But in other churches we feel, on entering, something in the air that makes us conscious we have come to Bethel. The very walls are hallowed by prayer, and if we sat silent, and no one spoke, we should be raised by the still and holy sphere of the place into communion with the Heavens, unless our own hearts were heavily weighted. Who can tell what power there is in an atmosphere in which praying men and women breathe. Numberless are the relations which all the past ages have given of the results of union in prayer. To doubt such results is to doubt the words of Jesus, who said, "Whatsoever ye shall agree to ask in my name, it shall be done." And that first great miracle of the Christian Church—the Pentecostal gift of the spirit, came when the disciples were all assembled "with one accord," praying in an upper room. It came as a rushing, mighty wind among them, a new element in the atmosphere.

But other kinds of spiritual influences actively operate in other public assemblages. Conspicuous among places of amusement are theatres. And highly important as the theatre might be, and ought to be, as an educative and civilizing power, I am constrained to believe that in England its influence is, on the whole, very noxious. Professing to inculcate better morals and higher sentiments, and, indeed, ostentatiously displaying these in the text of many popular plays, yet the surroundings of the stage are vitiating. If there were but this well-known fact, that the theatre is a centre around which are attracted those unhappy women who minister to the vilest lust, it would be sufficient to condemn it. These surround the institution with a

morally malignant atmosphere. But corrupt tastes are also consulted in the amusements provided, and tired bodies and minds are galvanized, in midnight hours, in a burnt-up air glaring with gaslight, into the excitement of unhealthy pleasures. I have scarcely ever gone into a theatre of late years, but I have sensibly felt an atmosphere of dissipation and moral langour. It seemed as though the nerves of good principles must relax in such an air, however much the morals of the play might tell you they ought to be firm. You vainly admonish a man to be strong if you stop his breath. He must faint, and shortly die. And a healthy moral air is as needful to strong, moral principle. When shall we discover that good precept is but a small part of good training? How many families have been poisoned with a hypocritically foul atmosphere, while they were crammed with good precepts?

If Spiritualism could but lead our moralists, our divines, our poets, teachers, and guides of every order, to some perception of the great ocean tides of spiritual influence which surround us, and on which our lives rock and float, instead of merely noting the surf that rises when some obstruction causes a phenomenal dash of the surging waves, we might hope that many mysteries would be unveiled, many occult laws of our being revealed. At present, all is surface observation. Though conscious of impulses, presentiments, secret sensations of like or dislike, we must repress all such things as unworthy of attention. Thus we lose at length, the power of observing them, and become blind and deaf to many tokens and monitions which might become unerring guidance if carefully attended to. How common is the observation that one has, on a first sight of a person, a true impression of his character. Women have these impressions much more commonly and strongly than men.

I think there are few people who have not, at some period of their life, fallen under the influence of some one more powerful than they, in whose company they have felt themselves unable to do what they had, perhaps, previously resolved to do. To a youth, nothing is more disastrous than a depraved companion, who can enslave him. He resolves when alone upon a course of independent action, but the moment he is with his enslaver, he feels himself utterly powerless. He cannot say or do what he had previously decided upon. He is abashed, cowed—his ideas are changed. What he had before thought proper and right, seems now weak and foolish. He is ashamed to speak it. The other may be quite unconscious of the struggle going on within him. It is a magnetic influence by which one pervades and subdues the other, of the same nature as that by which the electro-biologist imposes his wishes on his subject.

And I think that any one who has watched the current of his

own thoughts and feelings, will be able to understand how he may be similarly influenced by disembodied spirits with whom he may be in communication for the time. It seems to me far more reasonable to account in this way for the varying moods which govern us, and for the tendencies of thought which, in all men change from day to day, but in some much more than others,—than to suppose that these changes originate entirely in changed conditions of the stomach and digestive organs, or even of the more vital bodily organs. Doubtless it is true that the state of the body will give a hue and tone to the thoughts, but by no means to the extent often imagined by medical men, who believe in matter only. As well might we suppose that a north wind is the cause of the cold of winter, or a south wind the cause of summer's heat, as that these physical conditions are the sole or even chief causes of depressing, anxious, or cheerful thoughts and feelings. It is true that the north wind brings cold, and a south wind brings warmth, either in summer or winter, but we know well enough that there is a grand cause, quite distinct from these minor and accidental ones of the currents in the atmosphere by which the course of the seasons is governed. And though the north or south wind may intensify or modify the influence of the higher cause—the revolution of the earth round the sun—they cannot permanently interfere with its operation.

So also, if it be true that man is a spiritual being, and lives in a universe of spirits, all that can be effected in the tone of his thought and feeling by physical agencies, will result merely in certain modifications of the conditions of the material organs, by which the spiritual in man descends into the bodily consciousness. One can understand how obstructions in the physical organs may prevent the outflow of spiritual energies into the corporeal structure, and consequently into the external consciousness, in certain directions. Such obstructions may accumulate until the spiritual forces can no longer find their accustomed access to the vital organs of the body, and then death ensues. An injury to the bodily organs, therefore, may cut off the inflowing energies of life, which in a normal condition constantly descend through heaven from the Great Fountain of Life. The organism is thus exposed to the powers of corruption, and becomes the field of conflict of those energies of decay which are known by the general name of hell. They are the correspondents in the spiritual world of all those energies of decay in nature by which dead and dying organisms are dissolved into their elements, and utilized in new forms of life.

It will take a long time before this unbelieving age gets back to any true perception of the extent of its own foolish incredulity. We call ourselves Christians, but we are emphatically unbelievers.

Who is there that gives any weight or place to ideas which evidently filled a very large space in the minds of Christ and the first Christians? What do we understand by the "prince of the power of the air?" Why did Jesus breathe on His disciples when He said, "receive ye the Holy Ghost?" What do we make of all the relations of the casting out of devils—of devils of lunacy, of dumb and deaf devils, of spirits of divination, of spirits of infirmity, of legions of devils in single individuals, giving them supernatural strength with raging madness, of the legion of devils leaving a man and entering into swine, making them mad also? We scarcely trouble ourselves to think of these things at all now, or if we do, we think we know better than Jesus did, all about the science of these phenomena. It is evident that to His view the world of nature and the natural man occupied but a very subordinate position,—were, indeed, all but insignificant. It was the unseen spiritual universe that He contemplated, with its mighty powers and its overwhelming interests, while we look only on the outside of things, and foolishly fancy we understand them better than He.

Whoever will begin to observe for himself in the direction I have been endeavouring to indicate, will find, on every hand, numberless phenomena which are seldom thought of as of any importance, but which, in some wiser age, will be data for nobler sciences than we now possess. Our much-boasted civilization is, perhaps, the shallowest thing ever believed in as an ultimatum for humanity. It will have its use as a material basis for a better future, notwithstanding. Formerly, if men could see but little of the spiritual world, they were wise enough to believe that there was much beyond their vision. They at least acknowledged that they "saw through a glass darkly." The greatest men of the past had the most touching humility, and a full belief of the vast profound which the mist of the flesh hides from us. We, on the other hand, think we know pretty nearly everything, and that what there is beside the world of Nature is an obscure unformed limbo, not worth anybody's attention. Therefore, we throw ourselves, self-reliant and vain, into the grim struggle of life, wrestling with each other for power, and wealth, and pleasure, and scarce once think of those wondrous powers of heaven and hell among which we live, and the fiends, whose powers we are, draw us or drive us hither and thither by secret powers which we utterly disbelieve in. While we build and decorate, scheme, and rush here and there, they magnetize and guide us, prevented only from utterly destroying us by other and benigner powers, of whose existence we are equally ignorant and incredulous.

In another paper I will give some further observations on this little studied but inexhaustible subject.

LIBRA.

SPIRITUALISM IN FRANCE.

BY WILLIAM HOWITT.

“Le plus grand événement du siècle.”—*The celebrated Father Ventura.*

“Spiritualism is a great fact of the age.”—*The Quarterly Review.*

“Bon gré, mal gré, nous y marchons, et sous ce linceul épais, dans lequel la majorité de ces savants essaie en vain d'ensevelir la vérité qui nous occupe, elle vit, elle marche, elle progresse, et sera proclamée tôt ou tard.”—*Mirville*
“Question des Esprits.”

OUR critics in their frenzied attacks on Spiritualism, have imagined that they were merely assailing with sarcasm or abuse a little knot of people in this country who, standing alone in the world, must be speedily surrounded and crushed beneath their united blows, like some little flock of sheep in a glen of the Alps, on which the wintry mob of wolves have descended in furious swarms. To such a mistake that of Don Quixote in his assault on the windmills was the perfection of sanity. Had they read to any purpose those great libraries open to them, they would have found the whole highway of the past ages crowded with Spiritualists. But not even the present with its more significant and busy movements had arrested their attention. With eyes and ears stopped by the thick mud of the matter they are always so busily delving in, they had neither seen nor heard during ten incessant years, the whole of North America in motion and in excitement with the wonderful outburst of spirit-life. The whole of that vast continent was thrown into a ferment like one gigantic hive of bees at swarming time. Scarcely did Jerusalem and Judea, and the astonished world of Greek and Roman wisdom exhibit a more agitated condition when the first dazzling day of Christianity broke upon them, than did America at this second Advent “in spirit and great power.” Like the first revelation of Christ’s eternal religion, this second birth of it was in an obscure spot and amongst simple people.

“From that humble home in Hydesville,” says Uriah Clark, in his excellent *Plain Guide to Spiritualism*, which has just reached this country, and which both the informed and the uninformed should read—“as humble as Nazareth, the tidings spread with a joy and wonder akin to the angel tidings over Bethlehem.” The news that the chambers of death were again rent open—that all which generations of Humes and Voltaires, of physical and metaphysical philosophies had done to lay the restless human spirit in the ice caves of inanition; to bar up the doors of heaven, and to persuade the living that they had no kindred gone into the infinite, no loving souls who were not

merely awaiting them there, but seeking them here, was rendered vain:—the news that the spirits of the departed not only lived but loved, that they were sent down to confound deadly philosophies and more deadly theologies:—this news flew not on the wings of the winds, but of spirit, and a joy and wonder burst forth unparalleled since the day when the saints were drunk with the news at Pentecost, and were thought to be drunk with wine. People ran wildly to and fro to assure themselves of the truth; they sat down here, there, everywhere, and called on their spirit friends, their lost parents, wives, brothers, sisters, children, and they came joyous as themselves at the recovered intercourse. They rapped their gladness on walls, ceilings, floors, furniture. They lifted tables and chairs, and rung bells, and played on instruments in their heavenly delight. They wrote on paper, they spoke through alphabets, they spoke out often audibly and with their old, beloved voices, and the great land and all its populous cities, was one rapturous, thrilling delirium of joyous affection and re-established assurance of immortality.

In the cities, in the country, over the vast prairies, through the vast forests, along the mighty lakes the Divine news flew amongst the astonished population. And the spirit of the enemy flew too. The Herods, the Scribes and Pharisees, and Chief Priests, as of old, were all up and in arms to tread out this new fire. "The people which sat in darkness, saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light had sprung up." The Herods were eager in inquiring out the new-born ideas that they might slay them. The Scribes and Pharisees and Chief Priests of all persuasions ran together, crying out, "What is this? Who are these people? Have they a religion? Where are their churches, their priests, their altars, their ceremonies, and their doctrines?" And the reply was—"Distinctive churches, and paraded but hollow altars, empty ceremonies, hireling priests, theologic bones of contention called dogmas, gyves for hand and foot, for soul and body called creeds, and spiritual toll-gates, called doctrines, have endured long enough. The very angels have been roused from their heavens to preach something better than eternal damnation, infinite torments for finite offences, and splitting of polemic hairs instead of love to God and our neighbour. The fire is gone out on your altars; the world has grown selfish and cruel under your teaching; and the spirit of the ancient Gospel, once more issuing from the Christ-fountain in the skies, is spreading not like slow water to be pent up into sectarian ponds till it is stagnant and breathes death; but like the never-resting ocean, or rather like the electric fire flashing through the veins of universal earth,

knowing no longer bounds or impediments, distinctions or discords. 'This is the light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world,' and can become no particular man's property. Diffusive as the vital atmosphere, catholic as the sun, free as the winds, it is that great heritage of the universe which will envelope all particular folds, consume all theologic fences, set wide all spiritual doors, give life to *every* branch of God's church, and leave death to every *form* of church which has it not. The time is come when the very angels are gone forth into the highways and hedges, and all the hungerers and thirsters after the king's banquet of life will be compelled by their own immortal yearnings to come in."

Such an announcement was not received without consternation, rage, and gnashing of teeth. Affected contempt soon gave way to wildest, deadliest anathemas from pulpits, and the rostra of philosophers; but the great in-gushing spirit, which, like Gallo, "cared for none of these things," sped on its way, and in 1858, that is, in just ten years, in the United States alone, a million and a half of adherents were numbered. There were more than a hundred journals advocating the faith; there were six hundred missionaries running to and fro, and increasing the knowledge. There were some dozens of volumes of its history and experiences already written, and as to its interpreters, its mediums, its inspired speakers, they were countless, for every circle and every family had them.

Now was it not an extraordinary thing that all this din and convulsion of a continent, these marvels of apparition and revelation, this turmoil and conflict of opinion, this sublime progress of the despised and insulted novelty, had never for a moment, or for more than a moment, arrested the attention of the profound philosophers, the busy, restless, ever novelty-hunting *literati* of England? Yet when the supermundane traveller appeared on these shores they started as at an unknown thing, and began to jibe at it as if it had been a mere column of vapour that they could disperse by a single puff of their learned breath. If they had cast but an occasional glance across the Atlantic, they would have seen how little the acutest sarcasm, the most murderous tongues or pens had effected there. And now comes a grave, an earnest little book from America, called *A Plain Guide to Spiritualism*, by Uriah Clark, which will show them what form and dimensions this impassable thing has been assuming there whilst they have been lunging at it madly here. Could they have laughed it down, or knocked down the little troop of Spiritualists in England, of what avail while such legions were daily springing up not only in America, but as they have to learn, much nearer home.

There are now, in the United States, Mr. Clark tells us, 500 public mediums, who receive visitors; more than 50,000 more private ones; 500 books and pamphlets have been published on the subject, and many of them immensely circulated. There are 500 public speakers and lecturers on it; and more than 1,000 occasional ones. There are nearly 2,000 places for public circles, conferences, or lectures, and in many places flourishing Sunday Schools. The believers—the decisive believers number about 2,000,000; while the nominal ones are nearly 5,000,000. In the eastern continent the number may be reckoned at 1,000,000. The whole number now on the globe, supposed to recognize the fact of spiritual intercourse, cannot fall short of 20,000,000. The whole population of the globe is one billion, only 50,000,000 of whom are professing Christians, and not more than 5,000,000 regarded as genuine; according to orthodoxy thus leaving 995,000,000 of immortal souls with no certain hope of salvation. But Mr. Clark goes on:—

“These startling statistics must be met. They reveal the mighty work which some new dispensation is called on to accomplish, and the matchless mission which Spiritualism has already accomplished within the brief space of fifteen years. This Gospel has become an immense fact with its million of witnesses. It is not a creed or theory based alone on the traditions and evidences of the past, like the dominant theologies of Christendom, but based on visible and accredited phenomena now manifest everywhere in our midst. From the mines of modern El Dorado, to the bleak coasts of Greenland; from the rock of old Plymouth to the shores of Oregon; the ice-wrapped peaks of Lapland, to the jungles of the orient Indies; from the exile realms of Siberia, to the southern promontory of the Ethiopian Continent; wherever progress has carried the intelligence of civilization, there these spiritual phenomena, which have become household realities in our midst, have broken the lethargy of Materialism, and opened visions of the supermundane universe. And these phenomena, without any collusion on the part of those who are used as mediums, are concurring in demonstrating the agency of some power and intelligence other than that belonging to the sphere of material causation, and referable only to spiritual beings capable of manifesting themselves to man on the normal plane of earth. It is behind the time to contend that these manifestations are not a reality. Neither magic nor art, magnetism nor electricity, physiology nor theology can account for them. Thousands of intelligent witnesses have investigated, and their testimony is before the world, with an array of strength never equalled in behalf of any other system of science, philosophy, or religion. Neither astronomy, geology, nor phrenology, for more

than a quarter of a century, had as many advocates as Spiritualism has now, after only fifteen years since its lowly advent; and it may be doubted whether Christianity, in a century from the birth of Christ, numbered as many as the Spiritualists of to-day."

And this is the little, despised thing which our English *literati*, starting up from their busy pettiness of a surface and corrupt literature, from sensation novels and periodicals running an eternal mill-horse round of descriptions of social follies and fashionable crimes; from the whipped froth of Anglicized-French dramas; from the luscious immorality of the opera, and the open, festering sewer of politics without principles, have deemed that they could snceer or cudgel away! But Mr. Clark does not state the case of Spiritualism in its fulness; he does not display its gigantic bulk as it is. So far from Spiritualism numbering twenty millions of votaries only, it numbers the majority of the population of the globe. All the Eastern nations are, and have been Spiritualists from time immemorial. The Syrian, the Indian, the Persian, and Chinese swarming populations are Spiritualists to a man. Buddhists and Brahminists, followers of Mahomet, or Laotse, all are Spiritualists. They are not twenty millions but hundreds of millions; they are the great majority of the population of the globe, be they of whatever religious creed they may. It is the great predominant and permanent faith of mankind, a faith imprinted in the heart of humanity by the hand of the Creator, and preserved there by perpetuity of fact.

To them, these gentlemen of the press and of the laboratory, who imagine themselves looking down from the commanding height of a major opinion, are, in reality, but a miserable section of the race—an abortive and shrivelled remnant, sitting in ludicrous judgment on the collective family and conviction of the globe. Christianity, in the weakness and apostacy which has befallen it, has yet only drawn a small minority of mankind to its acceptance, and, as it is confessed, in the multitude of cases, but to a very nominal acceptance. Those Protestants, therefore, who have abjured the universal spiritual belief of man of whatever creed or nation, are but a minority of a minority. Christianity itself is but a minority amongst religions all holding a firm faith in spiritual intercourse; the Protestant apostates from this spiritual faith are but a small minority of that minority. Every other form of Christianity as well as every other form of religion, is spiritual; the great heart and intellect of humanity maintains its faith inviolate.

It has, therefore, been an amusing spectacle to see the English press, in its greater number of organs, imagining that it was about to annihilate a poor little handful of silly fanatics, when in its profound ignorance, it was spurning at the great living world

itself. It did not see or hear what had taken place in America, and still more wonderful, it was as innocently unconscious of what had nearly ten years been going on all over the Continent. It need only have lifted up its eyes, and just across the Channel, it would have seen what might have inspired it with a few other thoughts. France, quick, shrewd and observant, has to a great extent become Spiritualist. Its catholic portion, its great majority, is Spiritualist by its predominant faith. That church, all over France, has its miracles continually recurring. But amongst its acute literary and scientific men, numbers have broken the trammels of infidelity prevailing in that class, and avowed themselves Spiritualists. Numbers of these have boldly come forward and justified their faith by their works. France has its "Society of Spiritualists." France sees at the head of both society and State, its Imperial Family bearing open testimony to the reality of Spiritualism. France has a numerous body of distinguished men who have written able and learned works on the subject, and it has several journals in its advocacy in Paris, those especially edited by Messrs. Piérart and Kardec. The names of Count Szapary, Baron de Guldenstubbe, Mirville, Cahagnet, Buret, Auguez, Caudemberg, Reynaud, Berruyer, Méray, Matthieu, Delaage, Goupil, Lacordaire, Louisy, Du Pôtet, Lausanne, Alexis, &c. &c., are to us familiar by their works on this great topic. Most of these writers are natives of France: one or two of them may be classed as French authors by their residence in Paris and the production of their works there. The chief of them profoundly familiar with electricity and magnetism are eminently qualified to distinguish between the action of spirits and that of the elements through which they manifest themselves. There is one distinguished writer, the Count de Gasparin, who has not been so discriminating, but has zealously contended for the development of the so-called spiritual phenomena by electric and magnetic forces alone; and that an intelligence as well as power is inherent in these forces. He has been ably answered, that is, refuted, by Mirville in his "Questions des Esprits" and "Esprits."

In Paris and in different parts of France, the manifestations have been of almost every kind and of the most decisive and distinguished character. Great numbers of persons have been healed, by therapeutic mediums, of diseases and injuries incurable by all ordinary means. Some of these persons are well known to me, and are every day bearing their testimony in aristocratic society to their cures by spiritual agency. Many persons have been called to life when pronounced perfectly dead by their medical attendants. Deaf and dumb persons have been gifted or re-gifted with speech and hearing, either by mediumistic

manipulation, or by direct prayer. A most extraordinary case of this latter kind is that of the youth, Gigott, of Briac, attested by the doctors themselves, in the *Revue Spiritualiste*, Tom. 1, p. 322. But, in fact, a very large volume of spiritual cases of what is called the supernatural, might be selected from the volumes of the *Revue Spirite*, and the *Revue Spiritualiste*, certified by names of person, places, and witnesses. The direct spirit writings obtained in hundreds of instances by Baron Guldenstubbe, and various other distinguished men, are familiar to all who know anything of Spiritualism. Spirit drawings are equally well known in France, some of which have been engraved, as the remarkable one of the "Maison de Mozart." The musical demonstrations have been and are equally singular.

It is not to be supposed, however, that there has been no opposition. Everywhere where Spiritualism has appeared it is curious and almost laughable to see how exact and how universal are the phases of opposition. What has occurred in one place has occurred everywhere. The churches have denounced the movement as of the devil. The Catholic Church patronizing all such cases of the supernatural that submitted themselves to its guidance, but anathematizing every attempt to go ahead of its authority. The literary and the scientific classes, as a rule, have sneered and sniggled sillily, without examining the matter. At first, when the movement had only shewn itself by table-turning, all these classes were as much charmed as anybody. All Paris, journalists and *savans* of all kinds, was in a whirl of excitement, but the moment there began to be evidences of spirit in it, these all fled, crying, "O, superstition! Absurd! Impossible!" The material philosophers, like our Faraday, the Babinets, Flourens, Chevreuls, burnt their fingers with it; and then, like the redoubtable Sir David Brewster, declared that "spirit was the very last thing they would give in to." Some of these famous members of the Institute, Babinet emphatically, had before declared publicly that steam vessels were impossibilities. The medical men were most doggedly decided against admitting spirits to the slightest "glimpses of the moon," which made M. Matthieu exclaim, in one of the public journals, "*Mon Dieu!* What makes the doctors all so opposed to spirits? Ha! they are afraid of meeting those legions of ghosts that they have sent out of the world before their time!"

But, spite of all opposition, Spiritualism in France, as all over the Continent, has stridden on calm, majestic, and invincible. In Germany, Holland, and Belgium it has produced a large number of works of the most philosophical character, to which I hope, ere long, to draw attention. In Switzerland it has awakened great numbers and produced a distinct literature there.

It has found able supporters in such men as Dr. Roessinger, the Ragazzis, Bort, Bret, Mistral, Amman, &c. In Italy, and especially at Palermo in Sicily, the attempts of the priests to put it down have occasioned great commotion. In Spain itself it has gone to such a length that the Church has made a bonfire of its books. In Spain, as into every remotest corner of Europe, the creeping pestilence of Materialism had found its way; but it is a striking demonstration of God's good providence, that wherever that soul-destroying poison had travelled, God has sent the spiritual remedy after it, even into Spain, where bigotry and infidelity divide the clergy between them. But let us, for the present, confine our attention to France.

In 1862, Allan Kardec made a visit to Lyons and some other places in the South of France, and published an account of it in his *Voyage Spirite*. He seems to have first sowed the seeds of the faith there, for I find more than one pamphlet from that district dedicated to him as the originator of the writer's belief. He says:—"The first result that we have ascertained is the immense progress of believing Spiritualists. A single fact will give an idea of this. On our first journey to Lyons, in 1860, we found there, at most, some few hundreds of adepts. The following year, there were from five to six thousand, and this year, it is not easy to count them; but we may, without exaggeration, estimate them at from 25,000 to 30,000. At Bordeaux, last year, there were not more than 1,000, and in the space of a single year, the number has become 10,000. This fact is undeniable.

"Another fact that we have been able to ascertain, and which is notorious, is, that in a great number of places where Spiritualism was unknown, it has, thanks to the denunciation of it, inspired many with a curiosity to learn what it was, and being found a substantial verity, these have become naturally partizans. We might mention, amongst others, a little town in the Department of Indre et Loire, where a preacher was seized with a desire to fulminate against it from the pulpit, as the religion of Satan. The population, much astonished, became curious to know what the religion of Satan really was. They immediately procured books, and now they form a centre of the faith through a wide district. Everywhere the growth has been in proportion to the violence of opposition to it. Everywhere the movement has commenced in the middle and intelligent classes; nowhere has it commenced amongst the low and the ignorant; but from the middle classes it has spread into the highest and the lowest throughout the whole region of society. Many towns at present have societies composed chiefly of the members of the bench, the bar, the magistracy, and the functionaries. The aristocracy furnishes its contingent, but, hitherto, chiefly contents itself with

sympathizing, and does not form or join societies, at least in France, but spiritual societies now abound in Spain, Russia, Austria, and Poland."

So insignificant is the state of Spiritualism in England, that Kardec does not even mention it in his pamphlet.

"In Lyons there are many societies of several hundreds each, which are extremely well conducted, and in that city there has been the largest general meeting that has taken place in France, deputies attending to the number of 600, from different associations. Mediums are numerous, and of various kinds; some attend the meetings, others use their powers only for themselves and friends. In Lyons are many mediums; some writing mediums; others, drawing mediums; one who paints in oil without ever having received any instruction in either drawing or painting. At Marennes, there is a lady who is at the same time a drawing medium and an excellent writing medium, both of dissertations and of communications from spirits in conversation. At St. Jean d'Angely, there is a lady medium who writes mechanically long and beautiful articles at the same time that she is reading a book, or engaged in conversation, without paying any attention to her hand, and it sometimes happens that she is not aware when the writing ceases.

"But the most remarkable fact is the diminution of mere physical phenomena in consequence of more spiritual communications. The spirits themselves say that the period of curiosity has passed there; the people are now in the second period, that of philosophy, and that ere long the third will commence—the application of Spiritualism to the reform of humanity.

"One of the most remarkable characteristic traits is that of the vast number of persons who believe, although they have not seen a single manifestation. They have merely read and heard and are satisfied of its truth, and its moral benefit, on the evidence of those on whom they can rely. At Certe, they know mediums only by the name and through books, but it is difficult to meet with any believers more full of faith and zeal. Everywhere the moral transformation which it produces is little less than miraculous. The doctrines of the Gospel are, as it were, revived in them. There are few paid mediums, and those only in one or two cities. The most disinterested spirit prevails, and by this we mean self-denial, humility, the absence of all proud pretensions, the whole thought being the prevalence and advance of Spiritualism. Those who make a trade of their power lose respect.

"It is remarkable that children brought up in these ideas, display a precocity of intellect which renders them very easy to manage. They lose none of the natural gaiety and spirit of

enjoyment, but they are remarkably free from the turbulence, self-conceit, and caprice, which render so many others intractable and often intolerable. The conviction that their departed ancestors and relatives are about them, inspires them with the desire of purity and self-respect. The moral effect of this is obvious, and as the children of Spiritualists educate their children in the like sentiments, a new reign of morals will be induced, and it is evident, that one day, the spiritual idea will be the universal faith."

Since reading these statements of Kardec's, I have been in Lyons, and found the whole of them perfectly correct. The facts are familiar to every one. Enter any bookseller's shop, and ask whether there are any Spiritualists in that city, and he will say, immediately, "Yes! more than thirty thousand, and there are nearly three thousand mediums." Every one speaks of his being a Spiritualist with the same frankness, as of his being a Catholic or a Protestant. There is a weekly sheet, *La Vérité*, published, as an expressly spiritual journal, which is very ably conducted by M. E. V. Edoux, who has also published a guide to Spiritualism—*Spiritisme Pratique*—a very sensible and useful little work. The working classes of Lyons, amongst whom Spiritualism abounds, have also issued a pamphlet, *Le Spiritisme à Lyons*, in which they express their profound satisfaction at the moral results which the faith in Spiritualism has produced amongst them. This pamphlet of 32 pages is embellished with four engravings of flowers from drawings by mechanic mediums which they state to have been seen with admiration by the Spiritual Society of Paris. Every one who has seen a spiritual drawing at once recognizes these as genuine spiritual productions. The *Comité de Famille*, of which the director is a M. Dijoud, state that in their particular association, they have three mechanical writing mediums, three intuitive ones, three seers of different kinds, and three mechanical or involuntary designers.

The articles in this pamphlet are of the most sensible and pious character. The writers believe, that amongst other spirits, those of John the Baptist, the apostles Paul and James, communicate with them, and certainly the communications attributed to these sources, are thoroughly worthy of them. They are of the highest Christian philosophy, the philosophy of love to your neighbour, to God, and to truth. The Baptist says, that as he came before to prepare the way of Christ, so he is come now to prepare the world for his second advent. That the living faith is lost and has to be revived; the world has again risen wholly into the ascendant, and has to be cast out, and the human soul to be once more baptized in spiritual water and in fire. If we look at the rapid propagation of this revived vital Christianity all over the south of France and the moral regeneration attending it, the

work is by no means unworthy of the evangelist to whom it is thus boldly and in the true Catholic spirit ascribed.

M. Edoux informed me that he was himself a musical and a writing medium; that his wife was also a medium. I was also informed that the sub-manager of one of the railway stations at Lyons, who could not play on the violin, is now become an excellent player on that instrument, entirely through spiritual agency. There is also amongst the Lyonnese Spiritualists a child of only three years old, who reads people's thoughts and answers mental questions. The spiritual community there and in the other Southern cities, divides itself into social companies as most convenient, according to their localities, and these meet frequently for manifestations, communications and converse. From these, deputed members visit the other circles, and thus the whole community is knit up into one general body, through which all the interesting intelligence circulates, and a living sympathy is maintained. The winter months are the chief time of their social activity and intercourse. There are in Lyons, both Catholic and Jewish Spiritualists.

In Metz, there are from 3,000 to 4,000 Spiritualists. There, as at Palermo, and in Algiers, the Catholic bishop has fulminated against the new faith. In the cathedral in Metz, a certain Jesuit father, the Rev. Pere Letierce, preached against it for three successive days, the 27th, 28th, and 29th of May of the present year. This zealous antagonist was replied to in one of the ablest and acutest pamphlets that it has been my pleasure to read. I regret much that the writer has merely designated himself "*Un Spirite de Metz*," but surely no reverend calumniator ever received a more decisive refutation. I hope, one day, to make the readers of the *Spiritual Magazine* more acquainted with the contents of this brilliant little performance. At present, I can only note one of its discharges of grape-shot. The preacher declares Spiritualism utterly and obviously a thing of perdition, because the Church is everywhere against it. The crushing reply is, "The Church! It is the Church which has created Spiritualism. The Church has apostatized from the faith of the Bible, and Spiritualism has taken it up. It was a necessity, an imperative necessity for mankind. The Church, like the Jews of old, has slain the prophets in every age. It has tortured, imprisoned, burnt and destroyed every genuine messenger of Gospel truth that has been sent to it, and now God has been compelled to send forth his angels, his spirits to do his work of salvation in the earth, whom they *cannot* kill. That is the work of the Church. That is the origin of Spiritualism."

The writer concludes by recommending every one to read the sermon of the Jesuit Father, Nampon, preached in the primatial

church of St. John the Baptist, in Lyons, and the pamphlet of the Abbé Marousseau, *against* Spiritualism, both published in Paris, as the most effectual means of conversion to Spiritualism.

Here I must abruptly break off. A vast amount of facts lies all over France, all over the Continent, which can only here be glanced at in the most cursory manner. There is a very numerous body of a peculiar kind called Fusionists, who require a separate notice. The one great fact, however, stands prominent as the Alps on the bosom of Europe. Spiritualism, the great theologic and philosophic reformer of the age, the great re-quickener of religious life, the great consoler and establisher of hearts, the great herald of heaven to the wanderers of earth, starved upon the husks of mere college dogmas, and loaded with a sore pilgrim's pack of Materialism, is marching calmly onwards, amid the nations, and on all sides rejoicing souls are flowing towards it. The stone cut out of the mountains without hands is rolling on its way and promising ere long to fill the whole earth. The *New York Herald* never said truer words than that:—"The development of these ideas will prove, without question, the greatest revolutionary movement which Ecclesiasticism has confronted since the Reformation." Therefore, we add, with M. Piérart in the *Revue Spiritualiste*:—"To you, Spiritualists, will belong the glory to have been the first to clear this great and consolatory way, to have prepared a new era. Have faith, then, combine your efforts, associate your intelligence, your exertions, and propagate the Truth. It is given to you to prove the existence of the benefits which flow from the Divine inspiration, and which are diffused through all nature till we learn to understand and to avail ourselves of them."

TWO EX-CHANCELLORS.

A REMARKABLE contrast may be noticed between two of the great notabilities of England, one of them the late venerable Lord Lyndhurst, the other the aged and celebrated Lord Brougham. Lord Lyndhurst has entered the spiritual state after a life full of honour and extending far beyond the ordinarily allotted period.

In a funeral sermon preached by his friend the Rev. Mr. Howarth, the Rector of St. George's, we are told that during his long comparative retirement from public life, he had earnestly devoted himself to religious duties, and was well prepared for the great change to the spiritual world. His last words were "Happy! happy! happy!" It is not too much to assume, that the calmness and joy with which he welcomed the angel of death, is to be in a great degree attributed to the certainty of his immediate and continued life in the new world of spirits, and of

its intimate connexion and relation with this world, and with those whom he was leaving, and that this certainty arose from his belief in spiritual laws, and the knowledge which he had acquired through observing the varied phenomena of Spiritualism. He was a careful and scrutinizing observer of all facts which came under his notice, and had no predilections or prejudices against any, and during the repeated interviews which he has had with Mr. Home he was entirely satisfied of the nearness of the spiritual world, and of the power of spirits to communicate with those still in the flesh. As to the truth of the mere physical phenomena, he had no difficulty in acknowledging them to the fullest extent, nor could he have entertained the smallest doubt of them from the many experiences which he had of them under circumstances of the most convincing kind; neither did he, like many, make any secret of his convictions, as his friends can testify.

In strange contrast with this is the course of the other ex-chancellor, in some respects a greater man, and in others of less intellectual stature than his departed friend. If Lord Lyndhurst had a greater age than Lord Brougham, he bore his venerable honours better, and did not trust himself so much to defy the inroads of time, which after all no man or woman born can entirely withstand. The honour of Lord Brougham is dear to us all. His great name belongs to English history, and it is no disparagement of him to say that he is not now for public life the man he was. Lord Brougham is not equal to the great Henry, and he should long since have gathered together his mantle, and have reposed upon his former dignity. It is only a few months ago that he gave expression to our idea in returning thanks for the ladies at a dinner of the Fishmongers' Company, when in regretting the absence of the female sex, he undertook to speak for them, and based his right to do so on the fact of his being now himself an old woman, and (looking round the table he added) that he saw many other old women about him. We were reminded of this incident on reading his recent address on opening the Social Science Congress at Edinburgh, in which after introducing subjects of the most heterogeneous kinds, having nothing to do with the subject in hand, he finished by a reference to Spiritualism which is full of odd confusion and forgetfulness:—

The ancients have told us what was their idea of happiness in the Isles of the Blessed, where they conceived the lot of the wise to be that, freed from all care, their whole existence would be passed in investigation and gaining a knowledge of nature. How they would have pitied if not despised us when told that without undervaluing the pleasures of extended knowledge, we yet regarded it as the greatest happiness which Heaven could bestow, to be graciously allowed the solace of looking down upon the scene of our earthly labours, and seeing with eyes which age and sorrow can make dim no more, the great body of those for whom we had toiled and suffered, exalted by the possession and by the right use of the gifts we had helped to bestow. Some,

unhappily, there be who will not permit us to indulge in such hopes; who believe, at least maintain, that our death and our extinction happen together. Men, it seems, have been sent from the South to inculcate this dismal error, *while those who will believe anything oppose to those who will believe nothing their visions of Spiritualism and direct communication with the departed. The promoters of social science regard such errors with contempt, only softened by pity.* Theirs is the belief held, theirs the hope cherished by Hale, and Bacon, and Locke, and Newton—belief in the “King Eternal, Immortal and Invisible, the only wise God”—hope inspired by the study of His works and confirmed by His revealed Word.

What a sad jumble is this, beginning by extolling the spiritual ideas of the ancients, which, so far as they go, are ours also, and in proof of which he gives a quotation from Cicero, and then, after regretting that some “who come from the South will not permit us to indulge such hopes,” he turns round upon Spiritualists to condemn them for maintaining the possibility and the fact of the communion of saints and angel ministration. If it be true, as he says, that his social science regards this error, as he calls it, with contempt, the sooner he turns to his Bible the better it will be for him. As to what he says, that social science gentlemen cherish the belief of Hale and Bacon, and Locke and Newton, it would have been more to the purpose, if he could have said that they believed in the Old and New Testaments, and in the spiritual experiences of all kinds which are there recorded, and upon which the whole system of revealed religion is based. None of his demigods are the equal of Moses, the existence of whom Lord Brougham ignores. But his reference to Bacon and Newton is especially unfortunate for him. Bacon, from whose works we have made repeated quotations, was a consistent believer in the ministrations of angels and spirits, both good and bad. He was a believer in witchcraft: and it was his hand which drew the famous or infamous Act of Parliament of James against witches. Hale, too, was notoriously a believer in witchcraft; and Newton was himself a firm believer in spiritual influx, and attributed his great discoveries to that true source of all genius.

The fact is, that old women are fond of keeping company together, and of talking over their tea; and we see that Lord Brougham had been taking tea with another old woman, Sir David Brewster, who, having a special grievance against Spiritualism, has succeeded in making his friend a cat's paw to reach the hot chesnuts for him. Sir David had just before written in his review, *The North British*, a foolish article on Mr. Home's book, in which, throughout the long pages, he could not, and did not, combat the phenomena, the existence of any single one of which, he owns, would overturn his whole system of materialism. All he tries to do is to hold up the facts to ridicule, without argument of any kind on his part, and to keep out of view his own disingenuous conduct towards Mr. Home, subsequent to the *séances*

at which he and Lord Brougham attended, and which Mr. Home has so well exposed. We are enabled to state, however, that Lord Brougham fully admits what Sir David Brewster denies, that the phenomena did actually occur, without any deception or imposture, and that they are true facts in nature, for which he cannot account, although in his opinion they do not proceed from spirits. Sir David says they do not occur at all, and that their pretended occurrence is a fraud. We should have been glad to have heard the conversation between these two old ladies, which resulted in Lord Brougham's coming forward publicly to try to help his friend at the Social Science Congress; but Sir David has evidently got the better of him for the moment. We still hope that Lord Brougham, when he sees the shameful use that has been made of him, will throw over Sir David, and tell us all about the contrivances by which he has been made to cut so foolish a figure.

THE THEORY DEDUCED FROM MARY JANE.

WHENEVER any individuals possessing a certain type of mind have collected a number of facts, it follows almost as a certainty that they will endeavour to frame from these a theory. According as the mind that thus theorizes is well or imperfectly trained to examine scientific or subtle facts, so will it build up a complete or unstable theory. As a general rule, however, there is a strong tendency to theorize, before a sufficiently extended investigation has occurred, and hence the frequent reconstructions that have had to be made in most of the leading sciences of the day.

There was a very admirable plan, suggested first we believe by Kepler, *viz.*, after a number of facts had been collected and a theory built thereon, the philosopher should take the opposite side of the question, and try to "hunt down" as he termed it his own theory, or in other words to endeavour to find facts which could not be explained by the theory. When it was proved that there were many facts none of which could be explained by the suggested hypothesis, then this hypothesis ought to be rejected, another substituted, hunted down in like manner, and so on.

If the person who thus acted were a real lover of truth, as the word philosopher indicates, he would readily resign his own opinions as soon as he found them inadequate to explain known facts, and thus truth must in the end prevail. Adopting this method we will endeavour to verify the theory explained in the September number of the *Spiritual Magazine*, as being supposed sufficient to account for all the phenomena spoken of as Spiritual

by the author of *Mary Jane*. We will merely refer the reader to the sixteen items there spoken of, and leave him to select from these those which will explain the following facts, which are merely some amongst the many which have come under our own experience.

A party of six attended at a *séance* for manifestations; after names had been written on paper, when both pencil and paper were on the floor, and after several names had been rapped out, these names belonging to persons long since dead, a person next to me, a medium, said, "A spirit is between you and me and wishes to write its name;" as he said this he placed his arm on the table and said, "The spirit will write on my arm." A young lady sitting opposite to me, who had never before seen the male medium, said, "I see who the spirit is, it is Miss W——." "You are wrong," said the other medium, "the name written is Amy, and nothing more."

Now as it happened we had not been thinking or speaking of this person, and her spirit we believed was otherwise occupied than in being near us—yet singular to say, Amy W—— were the christian and surname of the person whose presence was thus indicated. One medium here announced the spirit presence by sight, the other by a name written; one gave the Christian, the other the surname, and the two mediums had never met before and had had no previous communications.

On the *Mary Jane* theory we have then one or two rather serious difficulties. First,—Does the "odvlic being" that emanates from the bodies of those present, assume an appearance recognizable to the sight of those who see with the sense of sight independent of its organs, and does this "odvlic being" give names and appearances when neither of the two have entered the minds of those present; can it in fact assume a visible reality, as real to the eye of a medium as is a living person? If it can how are we to prove that our houses are not "odvlic beings," resulting from our thinking of bricks and mortar? for we are acquainted with persons who can see, hear and feel, these "odvlic beings" just as palpably as they can the material being who is now writing.

Another example:—A party of five or six persons were in a room, one of whom was a German; we were also present. A young lady, a medium, entirely unacquainted with the German language, took up a pencil, and wrote in large letters a sentence which at first was unintelligible to every person in the room; it looked like German, but two words seemed to be incorrect, and spoiled the sense of the message. Upon carefully looking at it, however, the German found it to be a quaint way of expressing that which was intended to be said, an idiom in fact but little

used, and the message was appropriate to him. The lady said she saw the words written in letters of light in the air over the head of the gentleman for whom they were intended. Bearing in mind the total ignorance of German on the part of the lady, item 7 on page 399, *Spiritual Magazine*, scarcely explains in a satisfactory manner this fact.

A young lady who was staying at our house some few years back, came down stairs one morning and said, "My old friend D—— O—— is dead; he came to me last night, said that he had entered the spirit world, had realized his condition there, and *knew how* to communicate with those on earth who were mediums." Two days afterwards the papers announced the death of D—— O—— who had died about ten o'clock on the night previous to the morning on which the lady made the remark already mentioned, and his demise occurred at a locality some hundred miles distant from our house. From item 1 to 16 we fail to find a law that satisfactorily explains this fact.

A few nights ago we suddenly awoke from what we believed a very vivid dream; it was to the effect that a near relative, F——, who died some months back, was present and speaking to us; with this person was also an individual who is alive and on earth. So strongly did this dream impress us that during the next day it was frequently occurring to our memory. On the following morning, that is the second day after the dream, we received a letter in which the following question was asked:—"Were you conscious the night before last that F—— came and talked to you with me?"—the "me" being the second person whose presence I seemed to recognize in the dream.

The article 15 of theory *Mary Jane* is illogical in its reasoning, the concluding remark about Mahomet being a proof or deduction not applicable to the preceding facts. For if I see John Smith and speak to John Smith, I have every reason to believe that John Smith is before me; but if I have merely a signature of John Smith's, I must use great caution before I can swear that John Smith's hand wrote the words.

If when a person sees a being which is identical in general appearance with one who is dead, and when this being gives its name and several facts to prove its identity, we cannot be certain it is not an "odyleic being" emanating from ourselves; how can we know that the horse we ride is not a similar self-created quadruped, the servant who waits upon us is not a mere condensation of gases and elementary vapours, and ourselves, not realities but emanations from something else?

Simplicity is desirable both in art and in theory, and we believe that as a rule the least complex theory is that which is the most likely to carry with it a portion of truth. We

do not find that our facts are at all satisfactorily explained by the theories found in *Mary Jane*, but they meet a ready solution on the spiritual hypothesis, and not only these few which we have mentioned above, but some hundreds of others, each of which is as perplexing, if we assume the "odylic being" as a real existence.

Notices of Books.

ANSWERS TO EVER-RECURRING QUESTIONS FROM THE PEOPLE.*

ABOUT seven years ago, Mr. Davis published a book, entitled *The Penetralia*, containing answers to some three hundred questions, put by investigators—questions growing out of "that extraordinary and influential movement of modern days, commonly denominated spiritual." The present volume is a sequel to *The Penetralia*, containing answers to about two hundred additional questions since received. These questions and answers as may be anticipated, embrace topics and classes of topics the most diverse:—anthropological, astronomical, biological, chronological, cosmological, and so on, through all the letters of the alphabet, including geological, phrenological, physiological, psychological, and theological, down to zoological. The questions range from "The Perpetual Verdure of Evergreens," to the "Interior Light of Shakespeare;" from "The Cause of the Winds," to the "Centre of the Universe," and the answers are given suggestively, summarily, wisely, wittily, poetically, and practically; and display considerable force, variety, and elasticity of faculty.

From "The Materialism of Chemical Science," we quote a few remarks which may be considered *apropos* to the chemical theory of Spiritualism which the author of "Mary Jane" holds, in defiance of Mary Jane herself.

We hold chemistry in high esteem, as the great pioneer science of all the modern sciences, but it is not clairvoyant in realms where matter is lost in ether and spirit. There is a limit to the investigation of matter. The science of the schools stops just where life is conjoined with matter in the organic sphere. . . . The true science of chemistry is yet to be discovered. It will come down out of mind, not up out of matter; and yet finer links of truth will shine effulgently.

From the answer to the question, "Why do spirits appear in earthly dress?" we quote the concluding paragraph, which we commend to the consideration of Mr. George Cruikshank.

These appearances are intended merely as *reminders* and *tests* of identity.

* *Answers to Ever-recurring Questions from the People.* By A. J. DAVIS. New York: DAVIS & Co.; London: BURNS, Progressive Library, Camberwell.

All intelligent spirits are great artists. They can psychologize a medium to see them, and to describe them, in the style which would produce the deepest impression on the receiver. The will-power, and the intimate connections between mind yet in the body and mind disembodied are familiar to most spirits. They can easily represent themselves as being old or young, as in worldly dress or in flowing robes, as is deemed best suited to accomplish the ends of the visitation. They substitute pantomime and appearance for oral explanations.

One of Mr. Davis's correspondents accompanies the question. "What is an apparition?" with the following narrative; which, it will be seen confirms the similar one given by Dr. Child, in a recent number.

Recently, my mother went to her spirit home. . . . While on a journey, in March last, I passed into a sort of reverie, and was scarcely conscious that I was driving my horse. . . . I seemed to be at the bedside, or in the room where my mother was dying. I was speaking to her of the spirit home, and of the friends there, to whom she was about to take her flight. . . . When I awoke, I was somewhat surprised and saddened by the words which had fallen from my lips, for I had, at the time, no reason to suppose that my mother was unwell. On my return next day I received a letter, which informed me that my mother was dangerously ill. She died on the 9th of the present month (April), and in her last words, said to her weeping friends, that she *saw me in the room, and called to me twice*. Thus was my reverie turned to a prophecy, every part of which was perfectly fulfilled. May it not be true (asks our correspondent) that, *since my spiritual presence was with my mother, 1,200 miles from my own home*, that I may also be present in angel form with my mother in the spirit home?

The volume concludes with "A Psychometrical Examination of Abraham Lincoln," made early in 1861, the only means of support furnished being "The President's autograph and a scrap of his hand-writing." We had marked a passage from this for an extract, but are compelled to omit it for want of space.

THE AUSTRALIAN SPIRITUALIST.*

WE have just received the first four numbers of this new periodical, of which the publication was commenced on the 1st July. Our readers are already indebted to its editor for the articles which have appeared in the *Spiritual Magazine*, under the title of "Spiritualism in Australia," the third of the series of which is now in type, and will, we hope, appear next month. We heartily wish him success in his undertaking, and we hail this first beacon-light from the new world as a promising sign of the time that is coming upon us, when this great subject shall be prominent in every land. There was never a time when the eclipse of faith and the want of a spiritual philosophy were more deep than at this day, when knowledge has usurped the place of wisdom, and made itself a king instead of a subject. We sincerely trust that in those bright sunny climes of Australia, men may not find themselves so fettered and trammelled by pseudo-science as to

The Australian Spiritualist: published fortnightly, at Wollongong, New South Wales; by F. SINCLAIR, Crown-street. Price 3d.

run through the weary mazes of unbelief and folly which have characterized our leading men in England. We are well nigh tired of belabouring them, and we begin to think they may safely be left to extinguish one another; but should it be necessary to shew the inconsistency of our weekly or quarterly reviewers, we are glad to see that we may find pungent and logical articles ready to hand in the journal of our far-eastern fellow labourer. His pages also contain accounts of phenomena and *séances* in Australia, and philosophical and critical articles of high merit. We trust that the publisher may be able to arrange for copies to be obtained in England, and we shall be happy to advertise our readers where and when they may be purchased.

Correspondence.

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

SIR,—A week or two ago a friend related to me some experience at the table of a medium, whose name has often appeared in the pages of the *Spiritual Magazine*, to whom he was referred for evidence of spiritual existence,—evidence which he much desired to have. I noted down what he told me, thinking it might interest others as much as it did myself. He received at this sitting, by the usual means of the alphabet, various communications upon subjects quite out of the knowledge of the medium: some of them he knew were true, while others proved true by the result. In the course of the sitting the table executed movements impossible, apparently, to those around it, such as repeatedly leaping up a yard from the floor at the same time that another larger table in the room moved to and fro, no one being in contact with it.

My friend has a brother, a clergyman, who for some years has been in India, chaplain at one of the stations in the interior; this brother, returning to England, just after this sitting, was induced to accompany him, in order that he also might witness these strange phenomena. By the alphabet, the name of the brother was given with many demonstrations, by sounds and movements, of satisfaction at his presence. In answer to the questions of the latter, the information was accurately given by the alphabet as to where he had come from and the reason of his coming. Imagining, for a passing moment, that his London brother might have been there before and roguishly arranged with the medium to *trick* him, he asked questions, the answers to which he knew he could not give; for instance, "What was the name of the last military station I was at?" "Who was the commandant?" "What's the name of the man there who has the nick-name of 'Jolly?'" These questions were answered correctly. But the answers to the succeeding questions added to his amazement! "What is the name of the president of the board that considered my application to leave?" "Costello." "What is the name of the physician that certified to my ill-health?" "Costello." "Oh, spirits," said the medium, "you've spelt that name already." "Nevertheless, it happens to be right," said the questioner. "What is the name of my native servant, my bearer?" "Hadjoo." This was exact too! The gentleman then asked, "Do you know my profession?" (I need scarcely say that this had not been mentioned.) At first, a facetious answer was given at which the gentleman looked half offended, half diverted. On its being then asked if they would rap at his writing what it was, the answer was in the affirmative, and he privately wrote a number of professions, but no sound came until he came to that of "clergyman," and then followed a sort of victorious roll of raps. (The gentleman, whom I have seen, has more a military than clerical aspect; and if I had been asked I should have *guessed* him a major at least.) Other questions were answered, convincing the brothers that they were in presence of invisible intelligences; but I stopped making notes here.

I related some of these particulars to a gentleman, Dr. R——, who, calling on me shortly afterwards, asked me as to my acquaintance with such phenomena, and he, in return, gave me a piece of his experience at the same medium's. At her table he had received, through the alphabet, the name of a deceased friend, with a promise of a communication at a subsequent evening. At the appointed evening he went. Sitting at the table, "Strike," was the first word spelt. His friend having been a peaceful man, he was surprised at this exordium; his surprise was not diminished when, by the alphabet, this was stated to have been the name of the individual communicating. Dr. R—— remembered having had some transactions with a person of that combative name at Melbourne, many years ago; but having moved shortly after to Adelaide, from whence he has just returned to England, he had quite forgotten him. "Strike," he said, "dealt in horses, and his character was not of the best." In answer to questions the spirit communicated that he was not happy; that he died six years ago. Nothing intelligible could be obtained beyond this, at a sitting to which he went with such different expectations. It seemed as if other similar spirits had come with Strike. Dr. R—— meeting shortly after, here in London, an old Melbourne acquaintance, asked him about this individual, and from him learned that he did actually die there at the time specified at the table.

Let me finish with the items of a sitting at which I was present. A sister-in-law has recently returned from America, and as she had not there witnessed any of the phenomena with which we had been so long familiar, my wife proposed that she should go with us to the same medium's, Mrs. M——, and we went forthwith. Sitting at the table, with others who were there, my sister-in-law's chair was turned half round, and then tilted so that she could scarcely keep her seat; it was then slowly turned into its original position. Through the alphabet it was intimated that this was done to show her the reality of the action of spirits. "Is it done by one of her family?" I asked. "No." "By one of mine?" "Yes." "Who?" "William D——." "My brother or cousin?" "Uncle." Thinking there might be a mistake, although I remembered hearing often about an uncle of that name who had left the world before I made my appearance in it, I asked, "Will you give the number of years you have left here?" Sixty distinct raps were made. Confounded at the moment by such a lapse of time, I said, "Is there a mistake? may I trouble you to state the time again?" The reply was given by ten raps, six times repeated, a pause being marked between each ten. "Is there a spirit of her own family present?" Then followed, through the alphabet, a short religious exhortation, ostensibly from her mother, and another from her nephew, of which I am sorry I have not copies. Communications to us then ceased, others being sought by the rest of the party. The grandson of William D—— calling on me two days after, I enquired of him the date of his grandfather's death. He said that he died when his father, as he had often heard him state, was an infant: his father was born in 1802. So far for the accuracy of the "sixty years." Then how was I to account for William D——, "dead" before I was born, presenting himself in association with my sister-in-law, and accompanying the spirit of her mother. The friendship of my family with hers, it appears, commenced with my uncle William, who on his marriage occupied part of her mother's house. It seems, thus, that they know us whom we have never known, and that friendships die not out with earthly death.

8, Great Ormond-street, London.

Yours, &c.,

JACOB DIXON.

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

Notting Hill-square, October 7, 1863.

SIR,—Having been informed to-day by letter from one of my sisters that the family of one of my brothers, near Clifton, had felt the shock of an earthquake, and, on enquiry, subsequently, that the newspapers were full of an account of an earthquake that took place about twenty-five minutes past three on Tuesday morning, I think it my duty to inform you that I felt the shock of the earthquake in my bed in this house about the time mentioned, and that I had been distinctly forewarned that an earthquake would be felt at London, twice, at least, if not three or more times, before it took place. When (to use the language of

the Hebrew Scriptures) "the word" unexpectedly came to me that there would be an earthquake at London, having some acquaintance with geology, and knowing that we are situated on the tertiary formation, that is, on the thickest part of the crust of the earth, I almost scouted the idea, and thought that it might have been suggested to me to try my understanding, or to turn my credulity to ridicule; but I did not entirely disbelieve it, as I have found from experience, so many things foretold to me often to happen, contrary to my reasonable or preconceived expectations. On Monday night, I had no recollection of the premonition I had received, and before going to bed, having a severe cold and cough, I had taken a double dose of pills with opium in them, but I lay awake, hungering for sleep, and wondering at the excitement of mind which kept me wakeful, when suddenly I felt my bed vibrating under me; I then thought to myself, this is real, it is not imagination: is this the earthquake of which I was forewarned, or is it a spiritual manifestation? and I looked at my watch, and found that it was about twenty-three minutes past three o'clock in the morning. Many of your readers will, I imagine, cavil at this communication. They will say, how is this? Why is this? Why should the Almighty select an insignificant person to forewarn him of such an event, which however extraordinary in a physical point of view, is yet of no practical importance? I cannot answer these questions. I am as weary as they are of these unresolved doubts and questionings. But I mention simple facts, and they whose ears are opened to believe these facts will believe, as I know, that a Being really exists, who is omniscient, recording what is past, cognisant of the present, and foreseeing the future; and that the Deity is not merely an idea, but an omnipresent omniscient substance, pervading creation and eternity, however incomprehensible this may be to us. And thus, from facts apparently trivial, the vague faith of other minds may be made to notice and to act upon intimations of greater importance; and such writers as amuse some, but, I acknowledge, disgust me, by the familiar spirit in which they receive communications from a "Mary Jane," be brought to a sense that they are tampering irreverently, though, through their simplicity, innocently, in the Divine presence, or rather with the Divine power, for God is present in all His services.

I remain, sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN PERCEVAL.

[Our readers will remember the remarkable incident of the assassination of Mr. Perceval's father by Bellingham, in the lobby of the House of Commons, being known to a relative in Cornwall long before the news could have arrived there by mortal means.—ED.]

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

Portobello Lodge, Lower Norwood, 4th October, 1863.

SIR,—I have just read, with interest, in your October number, some communications from Mr. Jacob Dixon, as I am a writing medium, and my experience is similar, and in some instances identical with his. I may mention as an instance, the fact of its having been several times told me that unhappy spirits could obtain relief from the prayers of mortals, and of mine having been asked.

Communications purport to come to me from many spirits that were known to me as men, or of whom I have heard, and from whom I write in different hands, and it may be interesting to know that when I first wrote from the spirit of D. C., from whom is the accompanying communication, it also was in a peculiar hand. I never knew him in his lifetime, and had never seen any of his writing, though I had heard of him. On receiving this communication, in order to test its genuineness, I called on a lady who had known him, and in comparing the handwriting of it with that of his in this lady's possession, the two appeared to be identical.

I send you the communication, as a recommendation is contained in it that its sentiments should be imparted to others. It was written on the request of a lady that a message should be written from some spirit to her friend.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

G. B. PRICHARD.